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**MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD** 6 May 2020

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NOTE FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ARGENTINA REGARDING
THE CHOICE OF THE TOPIC "SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY" AS THE
PRIORITY AREA OF ACTION FOR THE 2021-2024 PROGRAMMING CYCLE OF
THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FUND (DCF)

(Includes the document proposing the topic and the document on actions
related to the COVID-19 pandemic)

“2020 – Commemorating General Manuel Belgrano”

***PERMANENT MISSION OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC***

***TO THE***

***ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES***

**OEA 054**

 The Permanent Mission of the Argentine Republic to the Organization of American States presents its compliments to the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development / Management Board of the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (MB/IACD) of the Organization of American States and would to like address the choice of the area of action for the 2021-2024 programming cycle of the Development Cooperation Fund (DCF) of the Organization of American States.

 In this regard, Argentina proposes choosing “Science and Technology” as the priority area of action for the aforementioned Fund’s 2021-2024 programming cycle, as mentioned at the MB/IACD meeting on March 12, 2020 and at the informal virtual meeting of April 27, 2020.

 Argentina’s proposal is based on the impacts of the current pandemic that have altered the international context and, consequently, international cooperation activities as well. While, currently, the priority for countries, international organizations, regional blocs, and other players on the international stage is to address the health, economic, and social crisis unleashed by COVID-19, they are also beginning to discern the need to rethink the role of international cooperation in the medium and long term, in a new “post-pandemic” scenario. Accordingly, it is in our strategic interest to deepen regional cooperation in scientific and technological innovation.

 The current context has indeed accorded science pride of place, given its essential role in fighting the pandemic. It is incumbent upon all of us to deal with it and to undertake whatever steps are needed to direct research and international scientific cooperation toward finding solutions and measures capable of mitigating its effects on humanity.

 Transferring technology is one of the core instruments used by international cooperation. Countries with weakened infrastructure cannot handle global challenges such as those posed by this pandemic. Not even countries better placed to make the most of technological progress can subsist and advance in a context in which the difficulties their neighbors face pose a risk to their own development.

Management Board of the

Inter-American Agency for Cooperation

 and Development (IACD)

Washington, D.C.

 Globalization created a setting for humanity in which the pandemic encountered no barriers to contagion, with the disease attacking human beings all over the planet, with no discrimination. It is equally true to say that it will be by acting together, through shared experience and joint developments, that a solution to the pandemic will be found, whereby the path to that solution will be international scientific cooperation.

 With that in mind, attached to this note are two documents setting forth the bases and arguments supporting Argentina’s proposal, together with a list of the concrete actions undertaken through the National Directorate of Cooperation and Institutional Integration of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation of the Argentine Republic aimed at strengthening scientific development and the sharing and transfer of technology, within the international cooperation framework.

 Finally, given that the next Ministerial Meeting, to be held in Jamaica on November 10-11, 2020, will be the Sixth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology, Argentina would like to stress that, in its view, choosing Science and Technology as the area of Action for the next programming cycle of the Development Cooperation Fund could help trigger positive synergies in connection with the work of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI).

 The Argentine Republic would be grateful if this note could be circulated to the member states of the MB/IACD.

 The Permanent Mission of the Argentine Republic to the Organization of American States avails itself of this opportunity to convey to the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development / Management Board of the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD) of the Organization of American States renewed assurances of its highest consideration.

Washington, D.C., May 6, 2020

April 30, 2020

**Republic of Argentina**

**Proposal to make "Science and Technology" the primary focus of the
2021-2024 programming cycle of the Development Cooperation Fund (DCF)
of the Organization of American States (OAS)**

According to the Statutes of the Development Cooperation Fund (DCF) of the Organization of American States (OAS), adopted by resolution AG/RES. 2817 (XLIV-O/14) of the OAS General Assembly at its forty-fourth regular session, the member states are to select one Area of Action (principal thematic area) and up to four corresponding Programs (within that thematic area) of the Strategic Plan for Partnership for Development for each programmatic cycle of the Fund.

The eight priority areas established in the current Strategic Plan are: 1) Social development and creation of productive employment; 2) Education; 3) Economic Diversification and integration, trade liberalization, and market access; 4) Scientific development and the exchange and transfer of technology; 5) Strengthening of democratic institutions; 6) Sustainable tourism development; 7) Sustainable development and environment; and 8) Culture.

The XLIV Regular Meeting of CIDI, held on November 28, 2014, embraced the findings of the survey conducted at the time among the member states and decided that the area of action for the first (2014-2017) programming cycle of the DCF would be “Social development and creation of productive employment”, with the following four programs: Creation of Productive Employment, Social Inclusion/Social Protection, Community Development, and Workforce Development.

At the XLVI Regular Meeting of CIDI, held on January 12, 2017, the member states approved “Education” as the area of action for the second (2017-2021) programming cycle of the DCF, with the following programs: Quality, inclusive and equitable education; Strengthening of the teaching profession; Comprehensive early childhood care.

At the meeting of the Management Board of the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (MB/IACD), held on Thursday, March 12, 2020, the delegation of Argentina proposed “Science and Technology” as the priority area of action for the Fund’s 2021-2024 cycle. It maintained that position at the informal virtual meeting of the IACD Management Board on Monday, April 27, 2020, and its proposal was supported by other countries.

Argentina’s proposal is based on the fact that the current pandemic is altering the international context and, consequently, international cooperation activities as well. While, currently, the priority for countries, international organizations, regional blocs, and other players on the international stage is to address the health, economic, and social crisis unleashed by COVID-19, they are also beginning to discern the need to rethink the role of international cooperation in the medium and long term, in a new “post-pandemic” scenario. Accordingly, it is in our strategic interest to deepen regional cooperation in scientific and technological innovation.

The current context has indeed accorded science pride of place, given its essential role in fighting the pandemic. It is incumbent upon all of us to deal with it and to undertake whatever steps are needed to direct research and international scientific cooperation toward finding solutions and measures capable of mitigating its effects on humanity.

Transferring technology is one of the core instruments used by international cooperation. Countries with weakened infrastructure cannot handle global challenges such as those posed by this pandemic. Not even countries better placed to make the most of technological progress can subsist and advance in a context in which the difficulties their neighbors face pose a risk to their own development.

Globalization created a setting for humanity in which the pandemic encountered no barriers to contagion, with the disease attacking human beings all over the planet, with no discrimination. It is equally true to say that it will be by acting together, through shared experience and joint developments, that a solution to the pandemic will be found, whereby the path to that solution will be international scientific cooperation.

In light of the above, attached to this note is a document drawn up by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of the Argentine Republic listing the concrete actions it is undertaking through its National Directorate of Cooperation and Institutional Integration aimed at strengthening scientific development and the sharing and transfer of technology, within the international cooperation framework.

 Finally, it is worth noting that, given that the next Ministerial Meeting, to be held in Jamaica on November 10-11, 2020, will be the Sixth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology, we believe that choosing Science and Technology as the area of Action for the next programming cycle of the Development Cooperation Fund could help trigger positive synergies in connection with the work of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI).

**Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of the Argentine Republic**

**National Directorate of Cooperation and Institutional Integration**

Working in contact with other countries, regions, and international organizations, Argentina is keeping track of actions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic and seeking to share experiences and explore joint solutions.

We are conscious that this pandemic is teaching us to coordinate with counterparts abroad in monitoring events and drawing up reports that can help the authorities and scientific centers in our countries to make informed decisions.

Below are some concrete actions being pursued by Argentina’s Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MINCYT) through its National Directorate of Cooperation and Institutional Integration, which we share with a view to strengthening scientific development and the exchange and transfer of technology within the international cooperation framework:

1. At the global level, MINCYT took part in the Virtual Ministerial Dialogue on COVID-19 and Open Science, hosted by UNESCO on March 30, 2020 to exchange views on each country’s experiences and the measures taken to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Open science was discussed as one of the international cooperation tools that rapidly made it possible to embark on joint scientific investigation into the virus, its strains, and other epidemiological matters, and work was done on research recommendations for preventing and mitigating the global crisis. MINCYT is also working with the UNESCO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in two important areas. The first is the 2021 Open Science Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean (CILAC 2021), which is an activity open to citizens, with the participation of specialists in scientific and technical subjects, universities, the private sector, and civil society in general. In the run-up to that Forum, specific meetings will be convened regarding COVID-19 to organize panel discussions, roundtables, and other activities geared to participation, awareness-building, and knowledge-building debate.

**2. MERCOSUR**: Resources have also been harnessed to develop research-based solutions by funding large-scale biomedicine projects. Via MERCOSUR’s Structural Convergence Fund (FOCEM), a special budget allocation of almost US$16 million has been earmarked for the “Research, Education, and Biotechnologies for Health” project, all of which will be devoted to coordinated efforts to fight COVID-19. These resources are non-reimbursable and interest-free.

**3.** The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (**CELAC)** held a meeting in February 2020 to set up a network of virologists from the region with a view to organizing a joint approach to the pandemic. The MINCYT appointed two distinguished specialists and current advisors to the Argentine Government as members of that network: Oscar Salomón, Director of the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, and Claudia Perandones, Executive Director of the National Administration of Laboratories and Health Institutes (ANLIS).

**4.** **CYTED** (The Ibero-American Program of Science and Technology for Development) is an Ibero-American cooperation in science body that has managed to bring together specialists in the ViroRed (Emerging Viruses) Network – Ibero-American experts who exchange information and seek solutions to respiratory ailments – to work on COVID-19. In CYTED, we have also embarked on the implementation phase of a special action proposal for combating COVID-19 by calling upon a small group of experts to craft an Ibero-American cooperation project in this field. The Argentine representative is Dr. Elsa Baumeister of ANLIS.

**5.** Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness (**GloPID-R**) organized a high-level meeting in Geneva on February 11-12, 2020, jointly with WHO and a group of experts from all over the world. They included, as MINCYT’s representative, Dr. Elsa Baumeister, Head of the Virosis Department in ANLIS, who is currently helping the Argentine State plan measures to address this emergency.

**6.** With **Brazil**’s Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communications (MCTIC) and its Ministry of Health, we have been working since 2009 on a BinationalProgram on Cell Therapy (PROBITEC). Conversations have now resumed on cooperating in this field given that cell therapy is one of the treatments used (so far with a 100% survival rate) for patients who fall seriously ill from COVID-19. It is currently being tested in Israel. The health professionals association, FINEPANEL, has also written medical reports on the situation in the region as a whole and in Brazil with respect to efforts to fight COVID-19 and on the time experts think it will take to come up with diagnoses, treatments, and vaccines. In the same vein, we have resumed contact with MCTIC, the Brazilian Federal Government’s Funding Authority for Studies and Projects (FINEP), and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) to look into possibilities for cooperation or other options, such as organizing a workshop for exchanging strategic information or local dissemination of MCTIC and CNPq initiatives, or even cooperating with certain startups in connection with the technological development of Argentine and Brazilian companies.

**7.** The Ibero-American General Secretariat (**SEGIB**) COVID-19: Ibero-American Innovation Strategy. The idea is to devise a strategy for recovering from this emergency and the corona virus: a tool that will help the Ibero-American countries remedy the damage wrought by COVID-19. Both the Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) scheduled for October and the Ibero-American Summit scheduled for November will focus on COVID-19. To prepare for those meetings, a series of cooperation dialogues are envisaged: a) Research in biomedicine and public health; b) Technological innovation; c) Artificial intelligence and big data; and d) Digital Society.

**8**. With countries outside the bloc, such as **France**, we have already arranged to launch a call to participate in scientific projects addressing COVID-19 and the global pandemic within the ECOS-SUD (scientific research projects) program. The topics to be jointly financed by Argentina and France are: Studies of the virus’s pathological mechanisms; New prophylactic and therapeutic strategies; New diagnostic approaches, including the use of artificial intelligence; Impact of ageing and gender; Impact of climate and environmental changes; Social impact; Nanosciences and the corona virus; Growth and development, employment, social inequalities, and violence; Impact of the corona virus on ageing; Health risks and social fears related to the corona virus; Impact of migration and mobility on the spread of the pandemic; Post-pandemic restructuring of the economy and production.

In our view, this is the context in which the OAS, starting with the Special Multilateral Fund of CIDI (FEMCIDI**),** is called upon to act in coordination with these other international initiatives. We believe in the importance of ensuring that our societies have the tools they need to overcome emergency situations and mitigate their impact on our growth, thanks to the social sciences, with experts in economics, sociology, public policies capable of analyzing and guiding our societies as they are faced with events that have a global impact on society, the economy, and the development of public policies, naturally along with specialists in the exact sciences and in medical science and health research in this context, to analyze progress with the development of medicines and search for a vaccine against COVID-19, and keep track of the development in other countries of diagnostic tests, treatments, health measures, and public policies.

**ADDITIONAL NOTE**

This document has focused on essential aspects and arguments regarding the importance of these areas in the current context. However, it needs pointing out that they should be further weighed and developed as part of a whole range of actions to be considered when it comes to defining Science and Technology as the area of action for the next programming cycle of the Development Cooperation Fund.

We recommend that, if this area is chosen, a body be formed, comprised of ad hoc specialists in the subject, to help shape and advise on the scientific areas that the Fund should support.

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