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**ANNOTATED AGENDA FOR THE**

**FOURTH INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Climate Action: Building a hemispheric agenda to secure our future**

**Nassau, The Bahamas, October 3 and 4, 2023**

(Approved during the regular meeting held August 29, 2023)

1. **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this document is to outline the proposed topics and sub-topics for discussion at the Fourth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development that will be held in the framework of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) of the Organization of American States (OAS) on the theme of “**Climate Action: Building a hemispheric agenda to secure our future.”** It is proposed that the Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development take up the theme of “Climate Action” with the goal of defining policies, activities, projects, and other innovative solutions-oriented outcomes that put the Americas on track to better address the causes of, and resiliency to, the impacts of climate change. The ministerial meeting will be held in The Bahamas on October 3-4, 2023.

As of December 2022, 194 Parties had ratified the Paris Agreement,[[1]](#footnote-1)/ which aims to keep global average temperature to well below 2°C and as close as possible to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.[[2]](#footnote-2)/ The Report of the UN Secretary-General revealed that: (1) global mean temperature in 2018 was at approximately 1°C above the pre-industrial levels; and (2) that in 2017, atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide stood at 186% above pre-industrial levels. The Report concludes that if global warming is to be limited to 1.5°C, global carbon emissions will need to fall to 55% of 2010 levels by 2030 and continue a steep decline to zero net emissions by 2050.[[3]](#footnote-3)/

The observed and anticipated impacts of climate change include more intense hurricanes, and changes in rainfall patterns and sea level rise that generate economic and non-economic loss and damage across the hemisphere, will negatively impact the poor and undermine their social, economic and environmental rights and threaten national and hemispheric security in the Americas. These challenges are particularly applicable to disenfranchised communities, woman, people with disabilities and other underserved segments of the population. Since climate change places more stress on water and food availability, and exacerbates natural hazards, such as tropical cyclones, floods and droughts, among others, the conditions necessary to secure lives and livelihoods worsen, with negative implications for citizen security, earning capacity, dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms.

In addition to the current and projected impacts of climate change, the global efforts to combat these threats have been affected by other events. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine have only exacerbated these impacts while demonstrating how vulnerable and dependent the world, including our hemisphere, is on third parties to maintain food and energy security, while continuing to build economic growth. An approach that emphasizes strengthening hemispheric integration and cooperation will help with both mitigating climate change and increasing resilience to its impacts. There is consensus that a green pathway that promotes carbon neutral investments, fair and green jobs, pollution reduction, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, and attracting private investment is the way to guarantee long term sustainability and achieve an inclusive recovery for all.

This is precisely why it makes sense to work together, as the Americas, on the common causes and effects of climate change, while achieving our much-desired sustainability and economic growth, but without destroying the ecosystems that provides us with air, food and water. Therefore, an integral approach based on cooperation, better and more transparent climate finance mechanisms, just technology transfer, and best practices in urgently needed.[[4]](#footnote-4)/

In alignment with these objectives, the OA stands as a critical entity to foster a unified hemispheric response to climate change. As articulated in the OAS’s Comprehensive Strategic Plan (2023-2025),[[5]](#footnote-5)/ the organization convenes ministers and senior officials to address common adversities, devise solutions, and set collective action priorities. Therefore, the forthcoming Fourth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development is proposed as the ideal platform for shaping a hemispheric climate change strategy and determining the OAS’s appropriate role in facilitating such initiatives.

Further, it is proposed that this meeting serve to convene relevant authorities to outline an approach on collective hemispheric action that will meet the challenges of climate change. It will serve as the start of a more ambitious hemispheric program that will seek to elaborate a comprehensive **Climate Action Plan for the Americas**, including development of sector technical actions that may be coordinated by the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) of the OAS, through its Department of Sustainable Development (DSD). This action plan may be shared with the world through the 28th session of the Conference of Parties (COP 28) to be hosted by the United Arab Emirates, Dubai, by the end of 2023.

1. **PROPOSED THEME FOR THE MINISTERIAL MEETING**
2. **Climate Action: Building a hemispheric agenda to secure our future**

The nations of Latin America and the Caribbean are critically vulnerable to the ravaging effects of climate change. A hemispheric sustainable development agenda focused on actions warranted to combat climate change will further the efforts of the member states to curb greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen adaptation and build resilience. In the aggregate, the individual actions of the OAS member states in meeting the climate challenge will provide a fertile ground to galvanize an ambitious hemispheric agenda that will strengthen the collective bargaining position of the western hemisphere vis-à-vis climate change negotiations.

The central theme of the ministerial meeting comprises the following sub-topics:

1. **Climate Change Adaptation: Improving Resilience and Responding to Natural Disasters and the Impacts of Climate Change**

Observed and anticipated impacts of climate change include heightened frequency and intensity of hurricanes, changes in rainfall patterns, temperature extremes, droughts, and sea level rise. Key priorities ripe for ministerial discussion include:

* Nature-based solutions (water, oceans and biodiversity)
* Climate change adaptation and risk reduction, with a focus on local communities
* Access to science and data on climate
* Urban planning and infrastructure
* Public policies to respond to natural disasters, with a focus on human rights, justice, and gender equality.
* Integrated water resource management and food- and nutrition-security
* Local and indigenous community knowledge enhancement
1. **Climate Change Mitigation: Actions to Reduce and Sequester Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Decarbonizing the economy by reducing atmospheric concentrations of Greenhouse Gas emissions is critical to the attainment of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris Agreement. Also critical in terms of mitigation are efforts to preserve and enhance carbon sequestration via the functions of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and biodiversity. Key priorities ripe for ministerial discussion include:

* Transition to clean energy solutions
* Policies and planning for renewable energy and energy efficiency
* Protection and conservation of land and marine ecosystems
* Integration of electricity systems
* Regenerative and sustainable agriculture
* Policies and incentives to support innovation in low-carbon development
* Planning, incentives and policies (including carbon pricing, tax incentives, carbon credit, emission trading) for low-carbon energy and industry
* Sustainable transport and e-mobility
* Capacity-building in climate smart skills.
1. **Climate Finance: Actions to Support Improved Access to Climate Finance in the Americas**

Finance aimed at supporting investments in mitigation and adaptation is essential to meeting the challenges presented by climate change. There is considerable interest on the part of developed countries and the private sector to invest in decarbonization and transition. Key priorities ripe for ministerial discussion include:

* Transparency and harmonization of climate finance application processes
* Capacity and/or experience in acquiring and/or managing climate finance
* Institutional capacity to enable access to and management of climate finance
* De-risking financing for infrastructure and other key assets
* Hemispheric Support Program for Access to Climate Finance (hub)
* Private sector engagement
1. **Hemispheric Cooperation and Integration to Face the Climate Crisis and Secure Long-Term Sustainable Development**

Enhancing the western hemisphere’s bargaining power on the global stage, especially in the framework of the new funds to be negotiated at COP28 and deepening cooperation and integration across the Americas, will strengthen the hemisphere’s collective response to the climate crisis. Key priorities ripe for ministerial discussion include:

* Shared hemispheric vision for sustainable development
* Inter-agency coordination and robust information flow
* Climate resources and capacity constraints
* Consensus around institutional integration efforts
* Decision-making grounded on scientific evidence and guided by the principles of equity and social justice
* Dialogue, cooperation and knowledge sharing among member states, civil society, and regional organizations
1. **Consideration of the Draft Declaration of The Bahamas (Inter-American Declaration of Priorities on Climate Action) and the Draft Plan of Action (Climate Action Plan of the Americas)**
2. **PURPOSES OF THE MEETING**
3. Leverage Latin America and Caribbean ministers and high-level authorities of the Americas to develop a common vision on climate change and build a Climate Action Plan for the Americas.
4. Reinforce the commitment of the Paris Agreement for multi-level climate action and commit to accelerated climate action, protection of water resources, clean and affordable energy, disaster risk management and sustainable use of biodiversity including in the areas of mitigation, adaptation, and climate finance.
5. Promote inter-American dialogue and cooperation on sustainable development around the execution of the Climate Action Plan for the Americas, and the various decisions arising out of the Ninth Summit of the Americas “Building a Sustainable, Resilient, and Equitable Future” held in the United States in 2022; the Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Bolivia in 1996; and other Summits of the Americas.
6. Outline policies, activities, projects, and other solutions-oriented outcomes that guide the OAS General Secretariat’s (GS/OAS) work in the field and contribute to putting the Americas on track to better address the causes of, and resiliency to, the impacts of climate change.
7. Promote a GS/OAS shared vision towards the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of Parties (COP 28) to be hosted by the United Arab Emirates, Dubai, in November–December 2023.
8. **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**
9. The adoption of an Inter-American Declaration of Priorities on Climate Action **(The Bahamas Declaration)** establishing key courses of action to face climate change challenges, a Plan of Action for its implementation.
10. The Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development sign on to a commitment that outlines a common hemispheric approach to addressing climate change. Such an approach would emphasize the common concerns/needs of the hemisphere while highlighting the critical linkages between climate and economic development and strengthening democracy in the Americas.
11. The expansion and consolidation of strategic alliances and initiatives to promote hemispheric cooperation and integration to support the implementation of Climate Action Plan for the Americas.
12. **STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING**

The ministerial meeting will offer a forum for member states to share experiences and will serve to promote dialogue among ministers and highest appropriate authorities of Sustainable Development. To facilitate the fulfillment of the objectives of the ministerial meeting, each of the topics proposed for dialogue will be addressed during plenary sessions.

Notwithstanding the opening and closing sessions, the ministerial meeting will incorporate high-level plenary sessions on each of the four substantive areas of discussion, i.e., Climate Change adaptation, mitigation, financing and hemispheric integration and cooperation. During these plenary sessions, ministers and high-level authorities, representatives of international financial institutions and climate change experts from academia, international organizations and civil society organizations, will discuss experiences and challenges with respect to climate action and share possible options for implementation of commitments enshrined in the political outcome documents of the ministerial, meeting including through development cooperation. Each plenary session will begin with a call to action from a champion for climate action.

At the close of the ministerial meeting, participants are expected to set the date and venue for the V Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development and adopt the “The Bahamas Declaration” containing the main political agreements reached at the meeting, as well as the “Climate Action Plan of the Americas.”

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1. . [UNTC](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-7-d&chapter=27&clang=_en) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Climate conditions experienced between 1850 and 1900 (<https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/06/SR15_AnnexI_Glossary.pdf>) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . IEA, Net Zero by 2050 (<https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . OAS. Available at https://testing-guimea.s3.amazonaws.com/Documento-Publicacion/2cnnBAPlmfJGWnACg9wQGN27BI6NfbnbDrnxsqiV.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . Adopted by the Permanent Council at its regular meeting, held on May 3, 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)