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TEXTUAL

Presentation of SEDI Draft Work plan to CIDI

MADE BY MRS. KIM OSBORNE, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE

INTER-AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT (CIDI)

HELD MARCH 28, 2023

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Thank you Chair

Mr. Chairman, distinguished member states,

The world is changing. A transition away from a global pandemic has brought with it a transition towards a new global crisis: climate change.

In 2023, SEDI will continue re-tooling its areas of strategic focus to guarantee climate change is the salient cross-cutting theme on its agenda.

By bringing renewed focus to regional climate action, SEDI’s 2023 Workplan delivers critical programming to strengthen the sustainability of Member States and meets the demands of a changing region.

We have revised our strategic mission while staying true to the mandate for SEDI as articulated in the OAS Charter. The intent is to better position the Secretariat’s work to respond the post-pandemic era, the threat of climate change and importantly to reflect the under-pinning role that development plays in securing democracy, human rights and security in the region. Our revised mission therefore is to secure Sustainable, Inclusive, and Equitable Development Cooperation in the Americas as a foundation for *democracy, social justice, and progress.* Our Workplan, therefore, reflects this mission, and provides Member States, stakeholders, and external partners alike with the assurances that our work moves the Hemisphere forward.

Keen eyes among you may have noticed a few changes in this year’s Workplan. Indeed, the Workplan presents a new, updated layout: Programs, Expected Outcomes, Measurements, Partnerships, and key activities for the upcoming year. This new format more effectively communicates our vision for 2023, aligning the programs and projects we have set out to implement with the results we expect to achieve: benchmarks hold us accountable through results-oriented, practical measurements of a project’s success; expected outcomes ensure our short-term interventions deliver the most equitable, sustainable, and meaningful long-term impacts.

SEDI’s 2023 Workplan is organized according to six strategic lines and objectives as outlined in the development pillar of the OAS’ Comprehensive Strategic Plan.

Accordingly, the Secretariat’s Workplan will be executed within the framework of the 2023-2025 OAS Strategic Plan, applying the ONE SEDI approach – integrated programming and implementation with the elimination of silos between areas. Though our departments and their respective mandates are distinct, we share a foundational ethos which animates all our efforts with shared purpose.

I take this opportunity to thank the staff of SEDI for commitment to developing implementing this work plan.

In the interest of time, Today, across each Strategic Line, I will be bringing into sharper focus a few standout programs, activities, and partnerships SEDI will implement in 2023.

**Strategic Line 1: Promoting inclusive and competitive economies.**

In 2023, SEDI will continue its work accelerating the region’s adoption of new technologies and easing its adjustment to digital ecosystems – two factors essential to promoting inclusive economic growth, and, per the World Bank, helping to more effectively “explore innovative avenues towards green, resilient, and inclusive development.” A few of SEDI’s standout programs— Women’s Economic Empowerment Program, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Program, the MSME Competitiveness Program, the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC), the Inter-American Competitiveness Exchange (ACE), the OAS Youth Academy on Transformative Technologies, and Prospecta Americas—remain front and center in its efforts to increase productivity, regional cooperation, and knowledge exchange, investments and partnerships.

Between both iterations of ACE to be held in 2023 and based on the resounding success of 2022’s events, SEDI is projecting at least six new projects to advance economic development, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the region, and at least seven long-term partnerships around innovation-driven local economic development and resiliency.

Under our Women’s Economic Empowerment Program We anticipate taking our market ready women’s products to the online marketplace by providing them with the critical digital, financial and ecommerce tools that need and growing our SBDC Networks through new additions in Brazil, Ecuador, and Uruguay,

After a successful 2022 where over 27,000 students registered with the OAS Academy on Transformative Technologies, SEDI expects to offer at least three new course offerings this year—including one on Artificial Intelligence—to develop skills for digital and innovation economies. In this regard, our continued partnerships with Meta and Structuralia have proven significant.

In keeping with climate change as SEDI’s cross-cutting thematic element, in 2023 through *Prospecta Americas* the Secretariat intends to incorporate at least two new Centers of Excellence to the OAS Network of Centers of Excellence on Transformative Technologies – including one on Transformative Technologies for Climate Action. Additionally, by implementing the Work Plan of the Interamerican Committee on Culture (CIC), SEDI expects to engage in protecting and preserving cultural heritage assets by exploring opportunities with emerging technologies.

**Strategic Line 2: Strengthening the implementation of sustainable development goals.**

The UN’s seventeen sustainable development goals are as diverse as they are uniquely relevant to this Hemisphere – from eradicating poverty to reducing inequalities to acting on climate change, there is indeed rich opportunity for cooperation. Fittingly, much of the Secretariat’s work in this sphere is cross-cutting and boasts significant cooperation. As many of you know, partnerships strike at the core of SEDI’s operational ethos; we are therefore encouraged the UN itself acknowledges that the SDGs “can only be realized with a strong commitment to global partnership and cooperation.”

The Secretariat is strengthening this commitment to collaboration in 2023.

To build our region’s capacity to better prepare for respond to and recover from the natural disasters and other exogenous shocks, SEDI is working with the member states to develop a science and data agenda for building resilience in all its dimensions, economic, environmental and social and for Disaster risk management. Having launched the initiative in the Caribbean region in October last year and will be working towards launching the same in Central America. The main objective is to provide policy-makers and legislators with solid, credible information to guide their evidence based decision-making. I would like point out that this initiative which was programmed in 2019 and delayed due to COVID is now at the top of the agenda of the rest of the world as evidenced in discussions of the UN DRR conference which was held in Punta del Este a few weeks ago, SEDI is well ahead of the game. For us this initiative is urgent and we are eager for the assistance of member states for funding and cooperation support to move it forward.

To strengthen the growth of sustainable development ecosystems across the region, SEDI is supporting Member States in their efforts to enhance national and regional economic, social, and environmental sustainability, and anticipates that in 2023 at least ten countries will receive technical assistance relating to climate change policy development.

Through an extensive network of partners—including the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Swiss Cooperation Development Agency, and German International Climate Initiative—SEDI will continue strengthening water governance among OAS Member States through its Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) program. Additionally, the IRWM is benchmarked to provide technical assistance to at least one third of member states in 2023. Ongoing IWRM projects include: Fostering Water Security in the Trifinio Region (2023-2027), Water Resilience for a Drought Responsive Northeast Haiti (2022-2025), and The Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (2019-2025). I pause here to note that last week, SEDI participated in the UN Water Summit. It was an honor to see the OAS Water program so well positioned in the International arena, with well-established partnerships with the Global Water Partnership, the UN Water Hub, the Coalition.

Importantly too is the fact that the world is now recognizing critical importance of working on integrated water resource management transboundary regions, work pioneered by the OAS many years ago. Through our work our region is being recognized as an international good practice and so we can be leaders of cooperation in this area. I take this opportunity to thank and commend the countries of the Trifinio Region, the Cuenca del Plata region, and other regions, which have been partnering with SEDI to effect this important work with them. Similarly I would like to especially recognize and thank the SEDI-DSD water team, particularly Andres Sanchez for their solid work and dedication in this area.

Well done!

SEDI has designed a number of energy trade missions—through partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy and the Americas Business Dialogue—to bring together investors, project developers, and governments and attract foreign direct investment in clean energy solutions through the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA). In 2023, ECPA is projected to provide technical assistance related to renewable energy policies and sustainable energy management to at least twenty Member States.

**Strategic line 3: Promoting education and human development in The Americas.**

A 2021 World Bank report estimated that some 170 million students in the region were impacted by school closures due to Covid-19, a staggering figure which brings into sharp focus the need for more quality, inclusive, and equitable education institutions across the Hemisphere. A similar 2021 report by UNICEF approximated that, in Latin America and the Caribbean, 169 million children live in areas where at least two climate and environmental shocks overlap.

I don’t think it coincidence these two numbers are nearly identical.

This is why in 2023, through signature Secretariat programs in education—the Inter-American Teacher Education Network (ITEN), OAS Alliance with ProFuturo Foundation, and the Educational Portal of the Americas—SEDI will continue to work on strengthening the teaching profession, helping educators embrace the digital transformation of their teaching and learning practices. SEDI’s goal in 2023 is to provide teachers with classroom innovation training, and tailormade responses to member states’ varied digital education infrastructure needs.

The OAS Scholarship and Training Programs, will work in tandem to expand educational offers on sustainable development areas, chief among them climate change, through the provision of scholarships and training. Through our over 250 partners—including governments, public and private universities in both OAS Member States and Observer Countries—the Secretariat anticipates implementing and at least thirty programs under the Partnerships Program.

**Strategic line 4: Promoting decent, dignified, and productive work for all.**

SEDI works to fulfill the mandates of the Inter-American Conference of Labor Ministers—chief among them building a more resilient working world and achieving a sustainable, fair, and people-centered employment recovery—and in 2023 looks to engage more closely with regional Ministries of Labor, deepening cooperation among member states. This work is timely, given that last month, the International Labor Organization projected Latin America and the Caribbean to have a “highly complex and uncertain” labor market this year. Such looming challenges include informal employment, limited fiscal growth, and insufficient labor income.

The Secretariat is working to reduce those complexities and uncertainties in 2023.

Through the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) and Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML), SEDI is increasing knowledge across and enhancing the capacity of Ministries of Labor—our 2023 benchmark is to engage Ministries of Labor from at least ten Member States—to improve their compliance with labor legislation, fundamental principles, and worker’s rights. RIAL additionally expects to increase the knowledge and capacity of Ministries of Labor and Education to strengthen education and professional training systems to develop skills for the future and respond to the labor market’s emerging needs, and intends to engage at least fifteen Member States in collaboration activities to improve education-labor coordination, particularly on emerging trends including gender mainstreaming in labor administrations, labor inclusion, and climate change.

**Strategic line 6:** **Fostering development cooperation and partnerships.**

Two years ago, Samantha Power—the head of USAID—argued that, in the wake of accelerating development needs, it was time to “interrogate the traditional power dynamics of donor-driven development and look for ways to amplify the local voices of those who too often have been left out the conversation.” To foster bilateral, South-South, triangular, and international cooperation in the Hemisphere, the Secretariat does just that: leveraging multi-sectoral partnerships to deliver technical cooperation initiatives that are community based, locally delivered, and responsive to the specific capacity building needs of Member States.

In 2024, the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD) will host the Ninth Specialized Meeting of High-Level Cooperation Authorities to identify cooperation priorities in response to the region's contemporary challenges – in turn, fostering high-level dialogue on cooperation for development initiatives.

The Development Cooperation Fund (DCF) anticipates seventeen programs under the 2021-2024 OAS/DCF Programing Cycle completing their second year of implementation. Later this year, the DCF will also produce a Mid-Term evaluation report to the Management Board of the IACD.

The Inter-American Cooperation Network (CooperaNet) expects to conduct three calls for experts in priority areas for the region, guaranteeing that the human capital of the Americas develop capacities at local, national, and regional levels – indeed, our experts helping solve our own development challenges.

This year will see a newcomer join SEDI’s program rotation: a Language Cooperation certification program to promote the use of English, Spanish, French and Portuguese with the goal of fostering communication, integration, and cooperation our member states .

**Strategic line 7:** **Fostering the development of competitive, secure, sustainable, and inclusive ports in member states.**

In 2023, this the year of its 25th Anniversary, the Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP) remains engaged under its four strategic mandates: policy dialogue, capacity building, technical assistance, and private sector cooperation.

This year, the CIP anticipates granting 300 scholarships to 23 CIP National Port Authorities, CIP Training and Capacity Building Programs, and host three Hemispheric events in accordance with CIP priority areas. In turn, these efforts are expected to strengthen the CIP National Port Authorities’ institutional capabilities through training, knowledge, and technology transfer activities in sector-relevant topics such as logistics and innovation in port operations, port management, digitalization, port protection, and disaster risk management.

A full calendar of events—including the 4th Hemispheric Seminar on Public Policy, Legislation and Regulation in Uruguay, the 5th Hemispheric Conference on Logistics, Innovation and Competitiveness in Panama, the 5th Hemispheric Conference on Public Policy, Legislation and Regulation in Guatemala, and the 20th Session on Women in Port Management Program in France—further promote regional dialogue and cooperation, leading to more effective, sustainable port operations in the Hemisphere.

I would like to conclude by contextualizing why the Secretariat’s focus on climate action is full-spectrum, comprehensive, or, for those of you who enjoy movies, ‘Everything Everywhere All at Once.’

Last week, the UN’s International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released an extensive synthesis report summarizing “the state of knowledge on climate change, its widespread impacts and risks, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.” It is, in effect, the most up-to date assessment on climate change currently available.

As I read the summary for policymakers, one sentence stood out to me: “There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.” “A livable and sustainable future for all.” Given that our own mandate here at the OAS is to champion “more rights for more people,” I, again, hardly think the similarities are a coincidence.

And although the Secretariat is keenly aware of the development uncertainties in delivering that livable and sustainable future: slow economic growth, displaced peoples, unemployment, political instability, poverty and inequality, economic and financial volatility, low levels of education and human development, pandemic recovery, one thing remains clear – the long arc of sustainable development must bend towards climate action.

The world and more specifically the hemisphere is indeed changing, but this Secretariat stands ready to change with it. With your support, with your collaboration, we can work together to improve the lives of all our people.

Thank you.

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