**SIXTH MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH AUTHORITIES** OEA/Ser.K/XVIII.6

**OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY** CIDI/REMCYT-VI/INF. 1/21

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OPENING REMARKS BY THE MOST HONORABLE ANDREW HOLNESS, ON, PC, MP,

PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA

Salutations

• Excellency, Mr Luis Almagro, Secretary General, Organization of American States

• Honorable Daryl Vaz, Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Jamaica

• Ambassador Audrey P. Marks, Chair of the Inter-American Council for Integral

Development, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the Organisation of American States

• Ministers of Science & Technology and Heads of Delegation of Member States

• Excellencies, Accredited Ambassadors and Heads of Mission

• Other Delegates and Representatives

• Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning,

It is with great pleasure that I address this Sixth Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities in Science and Technology. Jamaica is pleased to be chairing this important Forum, as we welcome this opportunity to further engage on Science, Technology and Innovation as enablers of transformation and growth in the context of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

The theme selected for this Ministerial Meeting, “Harnessing the Power of Transformative Science and Technologies to Drive our Communities Forward” is therefore quite fitting as we work towards a stronger recovery from the pandemic, one that is more resilient and inclusive.

The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities, widened technology and social gaps and particularly highlighted the educational gap for students in the lower socio-economic group.

Other challenges that have emerged include those related to widespread misinformation, privacy, data protection and cybersecurity.

Even before the pandemic, technological adoption was transforming tasks, jobs and skills. The pandemic has only accelerated this trend; some experts say by up to 5 years. Although technology and automation will continue to displace traditional jobs, there will be huge new opportunities created in Digital Economy jobs. The World Economic Forum in its most recent “Future of Jobs Report” estimates that, by 2025, 85 million jobs may be displaced by technology while 97 million new roles may emerge that are more adapted to the new division of labour, among humans, machines and algorithms.

We must accelerate our investments in the markets and jobs of tomorrow to get our fair share of these new digital economy jobs. In order to remain relevant and compete in the 21st century global economy, we have to fundamentally transform ourselves.

STEAM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) and Coding are at the heart of the global technological revolution. In that regard, here in Jamaica we will establish six new STEM academies and an academy for the creative and performing arts. Our efforts must focus on equipping our young people with the necessary skills “to harness the Power of Transformative Science and Technology” to collaboratively propel our communities forward.

We recognize the tremendous efforts made by the OAS, supported by our development partners, to assist Member States in addressing connectivity challenges, and for the training opportunities aimed at transforming the way we conduct business.

Ministers and High Officials,

We can only overcome the current challenges through continued collaboration and shared responsibility. There is need to consolidate our gains and redouble our efforts particularly in areas which will spur economic growth and development.

Utilizing new technologies in our service sectors, bridging the digital divide, the transition to e-commerce, renewable energy, biotechnology, biodiversity and addressing climate change are some of the areas which will underpin post-pandemic growth and development. Our actions must be results-based and people-centered.

As you deliberate today on several thematic areas of importance, let us commit to enabling a brighter and more prosperous future for the peoples of the hemisphere and, more importantly, the future generations, ensuring that no one is left behind.

I extend best wishes for a successful and fruitful meeting.

I thank you.

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