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VIRTUAL

CLOSING REMARKS BY HONORABLE DARYL VAZ, MINISTER OF SCIENCE,

 ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY (MSET), JAMAICA

**CLOSING REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE DARYL VAZ, MP MINISTER OF SCIENCE, ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DELIVERED AT**

**THE** **SIXTH MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH AUTHORITIES OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (VI REMCYT)**

Colleagues,

In the course of the last day and a half we have deliberated extensively on important issues related to the topic, “Harnessing the Power of Transformative Science and Technology.” We have certainly had a productive exchange of ST&I views, given the unique nature of this platform which has brought together a cross section of Ministers and High Authorities dealing with the subject from a variety of perspectives.

During our deliberations, several Ministers and high-level authorities exchanged good practices and identified areas for cooperation to help implement hemispheric actions aimed at accelerating the recovery from the pandemic. Our discussions have served to build on the outcomes of prior REMCYT Meetings.

From our discussions over the last day and a half, Jamaica is pleased to highlight the main results/deliverables of this Ministerial meeting:

It was indeed my pleasure to have launched the ***OAS Youth Academy on Transformative Technologies for the Americas***, with you yesterday. This initiative is designed to train, certify and expand job opportunities for 10,000 youth in transformative technologies by 2024 and 100,000 by 2026. The Academy aims to address the region’s skills gap and workforce readiness to fill the jobs in the digital and virtual economy.

As **Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness,** said in his opening remarks “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.”

The Secretariat is in the process of mobilizing agreements with several partners including IBM, the US Space Foundation, Amazon Web Services, The George Washington University, all of whom have offered to partner on the Youth Academy at the last week’s Ministerial on Cooperation and Partnerships.

Another important deliverable from this Ministerial Meetings was the announcement of the first two Centers of Excellence on Technology Foresight: A Center on Excellence on Blockchain in the State of Hidalgo, Mexico; and a Center on Robotics and AI hosted at Universidad Simon Bolivar in Barranquilla, Colombia.

 These initiatives are the first of an OAS Network of Centers of Excellence of Prospecta Americas on 10 transformative technologies. All OAS Member States are invited to host a Center of Excellence and we welcome the indications of interest that have so far been expressed by some Members States.

Some of the other key areas addressed included connectivity and access to digital skills in remote and rural areas; the importance of policies and programs that promote diversity and inclusion in STEM education and professional development. Several delegations provided specific examples and shared programs to provide support to entrepreneurs and spaces for communities to connect, learn and expand their opportunities in the digital and innovation economy.

 The importance of technology foresight and science for decision making was highlighted with examples of policies and regulatory frameworks to prepare Member States to address global challenges and development imperatives.

 The issues of MSMEs and public-private partnerships included presentations on how to build pragmatic and concrete efforts to reach business and people where all the actors of the ecosystem collaborate to effect change in our countries.

It is my hope that we will all seek to continue the dialogue and move with alacrity to advance, through collaboration and joint partnerships, the various initiatives that were identified during our deliberations.

We are leaving very encouraged and on a positive note, convinced that our region can and will bounce back stronger and more positive from this pandemic.

Excellences, distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the local planning committee and myself, I extend deepest appreciation to Ambassador Audrey Marks, in her capacity as current Chair of CIDI; Executive Secretary Kim Osborne and her team for the sterling support provided to Jamaica in preparation for this meeting and ensuring all ran smoothly.

I must also convey my sincere appreciation to the wider OAS membership, including the 31 member states which participated, with particular acknowledgement to colleague Ministers, as well as, the distinguished High Authorities; other Delegates and Presenters. I thank you for your participation which allowed for a truly successful meeting.

Again, please accept my very best wishes to all for a peaceful and enjoyable Yuletide Season and for a happy, safe and prosperous 2022. I look forward to our further engagement in the coming year.

Thank you!

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