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

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

December 7 – 8, 20218 December 2021

Washington, D.C., United States of America Original: English/Spanish

VIRTUAL

DECLARATION OF JAMAICA

“Harnessing the Power of Transformative Science and Technologies

 to Drive our Communities Forward”

(Adopted at the sixth plenary session, held on December 8, 2021,

and subject to revision by the Style Committee)

We, the Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology of the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS), gathered virtually on December 7 and 8, 2021, on the occasion of the Sixth Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology within the Framework of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI),

CONSIDERING:

That the Meetings of Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology within the framework of CIDI held in Lima (2004), Mexico City (2008), Panama City (2011), Guatemala City (2015) and Medellin, Colombia (2017), recognized science, technology, and innovation as vital elements for integral and sustainable development, economic growth and prosperity, knowledge creation and training of highly qualified human resources, and social inclusion in the Hemisphere;

That the Fifth Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology, held in Medellin, Colombia, on November 3 and 4, 2017, adopted the [Declaration of Medellin](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XVIII.5%20CIDI/REMCYT-V/dec%20&classNum=1&lang=e), “Science, Technology, and Innovation as Pillars of Transformation in the Americas” (CIDI/REMCYT-V/DEC.1/17 rev.1), where Ministers highlighted the importance to incorporate in the work of the four working groups of the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology (COMCYT) the value of the impact of transformative technologies on economic and social development in the Americas; to promote the inclusion of women and girls, and individuals within traditionally underrepresented groups or populations in vulnerable situation in the areas of science, technology, and other innovation to enhance their opportunities and their insertion in the labor market and their access to leadership and decision-making positions; and to promote multisectoral collaboration among relevant ministries, high authorities, innovators, and science and technology institutions;

Likewise, as part of the 2018-2020 Work Plan of the COMCYT to carry out the recommendations of the Fifth Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities, the Prospecta Americas Seminar was launched to improve the acquisition and distribution of knowledge of 10 transformative technologies and evaluating their possible economic, social and environmental impact in the countries of the Americas, whose First Edition took place in Lima, Peru, from October 24 to 25, 2019, and the Second Edition will be held in person in the state of Hidalgo, Mexico, in February 2022, while as a preliminary event, “Prospecta Americas in Action: Strategic Sessions of Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence” was held virtually on October 27 and 28, 2021, in coordination with the state of Hidalgo, Mexico;

That resolution “Advancing Hemispheric Initiatives on Integral Development” (AG/RES.2916 (XLVIII-O/18) instructs member states to: “Endorse the Declaration of Medellín, adopted at the Fifth Meeting of Ministers and High of Authorities on Science and Technology in the framework of CIDI, held in Medellin, Colombia”,

AWARE:

That member states of the Organization of American States have been affected by the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to threaten global progress toward eradicating poverty, including extreme poverty, in all its forms and dimensions, as well as reducing inequality, which are indispensable requirements for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

That the COVID-19 pandemic and limited connectivity exacerbated the challenges of access to healthcare, education, essential services, and technology to enable people particularly those from underrepresented, underserved, and vulnerable communities, to communicate and do business, particularly in rural and remote locations;

That the COVID-19 has deepened existing inequalities and widened technology and social gaps, augmented the educational gap for students in lower socioeconomic status, increased unemployment and worsened labor conditions in the region, disproportionately affecting women, individuals within traditionally underrepresented groups or populations in vulnerable situations, youth and less skilled workers;

That science and innovation-driven sectors and technologies have the potential to create opportunities aligned with the jobs of the future, to accelerate progress, address climate change, reduce poverty and inequality in the region and to contribute to greater economic autonomy, especially for women, youth and populations under vulnerable situations;

That the acceleration of the digital economy and the reshaping of global value chains have emphasized the need for OAS member states to address the skills gap and their workforce readiness to reap the benefits of the science and innovation-driven economy,

 WITH THE AIM OF HARNESSING THE POWER OF TRANSFORMATIVE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGIES TO DRIVE OUR COMMUNITIES FORWARD We Commit to:

1. Redouble our efforts to make Science, Technology and Innovation a fundamental component of the economic recovery post-COVID-19 and an integral factor to promote inclusive, green, resilient and sustainable growth in the societies of the Western Hemisphere.
2. Promote the use of science, technology and innovation to address the main imperatives concerning integral development in the Americas and to solve pressing priorities in the region such as food security, health, education, security, energy, connectivity, risk management for disaster mitigation and preparedness, address climate change, COVID-19 and future challenges, through strengthened collaboration and cooperation in research, technological development and innovation, sharing of science and data driven inputs for informed decision making among member states.
3. Deepen regional collaboration and cooperation to ensure connectivity for all in the Americas and close the widening technological and social gaps exacerbated by the pandemic, with a specific focus on ensuring the inclusion of youth, women, rural, remote and indigenous communities, as well as individuals within traditionally underrepresented groups or populations in vulnerable situations.
4. Work to improve the acquisition and distribution of knowledge of transformative technologies such as Big Data, Robotics, Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, Biotechnology, Virtual/Augmented Reality, New Nanostructured Materials and Advanced Manufacturing, among others, to identify strategic challenges and collaboration opportunities for the region and assess the possible economic, social and environmental impacts of these transformative technologies in the Americas.
5. Cooperate on the development and deployment of new technologies in ways that reinforce our shared democratic values, including respect for human rights, advance our respective efforts to address the climate change crisis, and encourage compatible standards and regulations. We intend to cooperate to effectively address the misuse of technology, to protect our societies from information manipulation and interference, promote secure and sustainable international digital connectivity, and support human rights defenders.
6. Strengthen national actions and regional cooperation to connect education to the economy, building capacity for the voluntary acquisition/transfer of skills and technology on mutually agreed terms to fully function/operate in the digital and innovation-driven economy and the enabling environment to fully integrate into society.
7. Redouble our efforts to endow youth with the necessary skills and internationally recognized credentials to obtain and adapt to the jobs of the future and improve their productive participation in a labor market spurred by transformative technologies.
8. Advance concrete, actionable initiatives to improve access and leadership opportunities for women and marginalized communities in order to pursue sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, science and innovation careers and to collaborate to address existing workforce inequalities.
9. Continue to develop the necessary frameworks and expand the tools and resources for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to transition to the online business environment and participate in regional value chains and the global economy, including by accelerating access to innovation, technology and innovative business development models and practices.
10. Reaffirm our goal of strengthening the Role of Ministries and High-level Authorities of Science and Technology to promote regional cooperation, advance policy dialogue and exchange of experiences, lessons learned and good practices and reiterate our commitment to support the work of the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology (COMCYT) and its four Working Groups on Innovation, Human Resources-Engineering, National Quality Infrastructure and Technological Development.

THEREFORE, WE RESOLVE:

1. To implement the Declaration of Jamaica as the framework to advance action driven cooperation on science, technology and innovation in the Americas for the period 2022-2024.
2. To renew our commitment and support to the COMCYT and the work of its four Working Groups 1: Innovation; 2: Human Resources and Engineering Education; 3: National Quality Infrastructure; and 4: Technological Development, including the ongoing voluntary programs of Prospecta Americas and the HUB on Commercialization and Transfer of Technology for the Americas.
3. To support the launch of the “Americas Youth Academy on Transformative Science and Technologies,” building on existing resources and partner offerings, to provide online training, dynamic learning, remote training labs, mentoring and hands-on experiences to equip youth with the necessary skills and credentials to obtain the jobs of the future and skills in transformative technologies and encourage member states to support this initiative with offers of cooperation and partnership opportunities to serve up to 10,000 youth by 2024 with a focus on women, youth, rural and indigenous communities individuals within traditionally underrepresented groups or populations in vulnerable situations.
4. To pursue the development of an OAS Regional Network of Centers of Excellence in science and technologies to map trends and capabilities in the Americas, address strategic challenges, and find solutions to everyday problems through shared expertise and resources from multiple stakeholders of OAS member states. We commend the Governments of Colombia, Mexico, and Jamaica/Caribbean for the launch of the first Centers of Excellence including Prospecta Americas on Robotics and Artificial Intelligence in Barranquilla, Colombia (Universidad Simon Bolivar), Blockchain in the State of Hidalgo, and in Jamaica/Caribbean. We invite member states to collaborate with these initiatives and pursue other Centers of Excellence to enhance regional cooperation on transformative technologies between governments, research universities and centers, private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners of the COMCYT.
5. To urge member states to exchange guidelines for protecting human rights in the context of transformative science, innovations, and technologies, good practices, lessons learned, experiences, training opportunities, and technical assistance to promote research, the use and dissemination of transformative science, innovation, knowledge from local, indigenous, afro descendant, and other ethnic groups; and the voluntary transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms to support post-COVID-19, recovery, the implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies, the development of sustainable bioeconomy and the digital transformation of member states within the framework of the COMCYT and its four Working Groups.
6. To promote collaboration on science, technology, and innovation with OAS Permanent Observer States and COMCYT partners including universities, research centers, NGOs, private sector and other international organizations to support the implementation of the Declaration of Jamaica.
7. To endeavor to allocate the technical, human, and economic resources necessary for participation in the meetings and activities of the working groups and to disseminate their convocation, meetings, and results to ministries of other sectors, international organizations, and other related institutions that could contribute to, and benefit from, those groups, according to available resources in each member state and the OAS.
8. To acknowledge with gratitude the contributions made by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Working Group 1: Mexico, Costa Rica, Working Group 2: Argentina, Nicaragua, Working Group 3: Canada, United States and Paraguay; and Working Group 4: Guatemala and Chile, as well as the partners of all the Working Groups of the COMCYT.
9. To instruct the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), as Technical Secretariat of the COMCYT, to continue providing technical assistance and facilitating communication in the Working Groups and implementation of collaborative projects and initiatives agreed on by member states, including by convening and organizing videoconferences and face-to-face meetings, when possible, among others.
10. To instruct SEDI to prepare a draft work plan based on this Declaration and the action plans of the four COMCYT Working Groups, for consideration by the ministerial process authorities.
11. To thank the Government of Jamaica for its commitment, and contribution to the success of the Sixth Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology within the Framework of CIDI.
12. To refer the following recommendations contained in this Declaration of Jamaica to the Summit of the Americas, to be held in the United States in 2022:
13. Connectivity for ALL in the Americas

To accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, reduce the widening technological and social gaps, and pursue a sustainable, green, resilient and equitable future, we make an urgent regional call to action to close the digital divide and promote secure, reliable connectivity for ALL to high-quality broadband services at affordable prices in all of our countries, with a special focus on access for women, youth, rural and indigenous communities and individuals within traditionally underrepresented groups or populations in vulnerable situations.

1. Americas Youth Academy on Transformative Science and Technologies

To harness the power of transformative science and technologies to drive our communities forward and address our youth’s skills gap and readiness to participate in the digital and innovation-driven economies and societies, We support the launch of the “Americas Youth Academy on Transformative Science and Technologies” with concrete offers of cooperation and partnership opportunities to serve up to 100,000 youth by 2026, to support those most affected by the pandemic, including students in lower socioeconomic status, women, minorities, and less skilled workers.

1. Centers of Excellence Prospecta Americas

To promote the use of science and technology to address the main imperatives concerning integral development in the Americas and to solve pressing challenges in the region, such as food security, health, education, security, energy, disaster mitigation and preparedness, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, COVID-19 and others. We support the development of an OAS Regional Network of Centers of Excellence focused on top transformative science and technologies to improve collaboration on research, sharing of science and data driven inputs for decision making, enhance the acquisition and distribution of knowledge of transformative technologies, assess potential risks and promote collaboration in the Americas.

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