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

**OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY** CIDI/REMCYT-VI/INF.10/21

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VIRTUAL

PRESENTATION BY HONORABLE DARYL VAZ, MINISTER OF SCIENCE,

 ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY (MSET), JAMAICA

(Second plenary session)

REMARKS by Jamaica (Minister Vaz)

**Date: December 7, 2021**

The Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, ON, PC, MP

Colleague Ministers of Science and Technology from across the Region,

 Secretary General, Ambassador Luis Almagro

Chair of the Council for Integral Development, our very own Ambassador Audrey Marks,

Executive Secretary, Mrs Kim Osborne,

Distinguished Permanent Representatives, Interim Representatives and Alternate Representatives,

Other Specially Invited Guests,

Members of Staff of the General Secretariat,

**Good morning and a warm Jamaican welcome to everyone!**

It is indeed an honour and a pleasure for Jamaica to be hosting the Sixth Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities in Science and Technology (V1 REMCYT).

Let me begin by expressing on behalf of the Government of Jamaica our appreciation to everyone who has worked assiduously in organizing this very important meeting.

As we meet virtually today, we are reminded that the entire world continues to experience the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our collaborative efforts are needed now, more than ever. Our theme for this meeting, “Harnessing the Power of Transformative Science and Technologies to Drive our Communities Forward” is not only appropriate but timely as it encapsulates the important role of Science and Technology in our development agenda while we seek to build back stronger and more inclusive societies.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As the oldest hemispheric institution, in the world, the Organization of American States (OAS) has been an important forum for cooperation and advocacy based on its important pillars - democracy, human rights, fostering integral development and prosperity for all peoples throughout the region, while ensuring a multidimensional approach to security; all of which constitute its fundamental pillars.

We recognize it is only through the exchange of ideas, the creation of partnerships, constant dialogue and networking, while creating synergies, between and among the thirty five member states, that the goals and aspirations of our individual societies can be realized.

Jamaica became a member of the OAS in 1969, exactly 7 years after our independence, and we continue to benefit from the multifaceted nature of is cooperation activities and strategic partnerships which have helped us along our way. Let me reaffirm our commitment to continue strengthening collaboration in areas of common interest. I look forward to guiding our deliberations.

**Distinguished colleagues, ladies and Gentlemen,**

The theme, sub-themes and the commitments made during this ministerial and high authority meeting, come at a crucial time in Jamaica’s history, as we will celebrate 60 years of independence, on 6th August 2022. Our country is on the verge of a massive transformation, within the framework of a new Science, Technology and Innovation Policy for the renewal of our efforts to build more prosperous and equitable communities in our country and across the region.

In this context, we have already begun to take crucial steps towards achieving the vision enshrined in the theme of this 6th REMCYT. “Harnessing the Power of Transformative Science and Technologies to Drive our Communities Forward” We are equally committed to taking decisive action aimed at achieving economic growth and the development agenda. We are convinced that the convergence between our objectives and the work being undertaken by REMCYT over the years provides a solid basis for our continued transformation.

During today’s meeting, several sub-themes will be addressed, and I wish to highlight the following:

* Science and Technology must be used to Build Resilience especially within the framework of Sustainable Development and post pandemic recovery;
* Youth engagement must be used to improve skills and readiness for industry 4.0.
* Science, Technology, Innovation (STI) and Entrepreneurship are crucial to bridging the digital divide and as a priority, should promote the inclusion of women and girls, rural and indigenous communities, and other populations in vulnerable situations;
* Effective public-private-academia collaboration is necessary to enhance competitiveness and quality of life;
* Additionally, we must work to level the playing field for active participation in the global economy by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through STI;
* It is imperative that Technology Foresight be used as Input for Public Policy Decisions; and finally,
* We must include Science for decision making.

Today, let us re-commit our efforts to these objectives and forge new partnerships. We must remain resolute that, despite the devastating effects of the pandemic, we will be able to harness the power of transformative science and technologies, with the aim of driving our communities forward. It is our belief that the sub-themes are indicative of the interests and priorities of all Member States, especially the smaller countries of Central America and the Caribbean region.

**Distinguished colleagues, ladies and Gentlemen,**

With strong leadership and the partnership afforded through your representation here, I am confident that our collaborative efforts will result in the transformation of our communities into resilient and prosperous societies across the hemisphere.

I thank you for your attendance and look forward to an enriching engagement. I pray for God’s richest blessings for all represented here, as we look forward to a productive and mutually beneficial meeting.

I thank you.

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