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

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VIRTUAL

OPENING REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR AUDREY MARKS,

CHAIR OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT (CIDI),

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE OAS

**Ambassador Audrey Marks**

**Chair of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI)**

**Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the OAS**

**SIXTH MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH AUTHORITIES OF**

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**INAUGURAL SESSION**

**Tuesday, December 7, 2021**

**9:30 am**

The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica

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

Secretary General of the OAS, His Excellency Luis Almagro

Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Science and Technology of OAS Member States,

Distinguished Permanent, Interim and Alternate Representatives,

Members and Staff of the OAS Secretariat,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

I am honored to welcome you in this Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Science and Technology in my capacity as Chair of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI). I am also delighted that the country that I represent here at the OAS – Jamaica – is hosting this important meeting.

Over the last 6 months, I have had the honor of leading the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, which has focused on the practical applications of new and emerging technologies in our efforts at post-covid recovery.

Member States, the private sector and academia have shared over 30 actionable proposals of cooperation and partnerships which puts us in good stead as we strive towards concrete outcomes for this Ministerial, and as we take responsibility of shared recovery of this region from the devastating impacts of the pandemic.

During this period, the discussions, and proposals within in the context of the CIDI, addressed the following 5 key issues:

1. Energy transition as an engine for post-covid recovery and the building of more resilient and sustainable societies in the Americas.
2. Regional collaboration to address the skills gap for Industry 4.0 and to provide the youth with training certification and job-ready qualifications on transformative technologies.
3. Results-driven interventions to close the gender and inclusion gaps on innovation, science, technology and entrepreneurship in the Americas.
4. The importance of data-driven decision making and increasing collaboration on research and development (R&D) to address the development imperatives of OAS Member States.
5. Innovative financing and expanding availability of capital for science and technology-driven solutions across the communities of the OAS Member States.

These key issues and proposals are reflected in the Draft *Declaration of Jamaica*. CIDI offered a space to present and pursue partnerships for the launching of the “Youth Academy on Transformative Science and Technologies” which will take place later this morning.

As the OAS Secretary General said, the Youth Academy’s goal is to train, certify and expand job opportunities for 10,000 youth in transformative technologies by 2024. Closing the skills gap will allow OAS Member States to reap the benefits from emerging technologies, improve productivity, contribute to higher growth rates, and reduce poverty.

The work in CIDI also advanced the efforts to develop a Regional Network of Centers of Excellence on 10 transformative technologies of “Prospecta Americas” – another concrete result of this Ministerial meeting.

Colleagues,

As I indicated in my remarks at the Labor Ministerial a few months ago: dialogue is useful. But dialogue which does not lead to actions is meaningless, particularly, when we are faced with the urgent need to change the direction of our region.

The Ministerial on Science and Technology was a call to action. A call which Jamaica has led, and which now force all of us to drive towards concrete results. Let us work with renewed purpose towards a more resourceful, resilient, and innovative Americas.

In closing, I thank Minister Vaz and his team, at the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology, for working jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Mission of Jamaica to support our efforts to align the work of CIDI with the VI Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Science and Technology.

It has been a joy to work with all Member States and partners, leading this process over the last few months. I look forward to a productive discussion over the next 2 days, and the results of this Ministerial.

Thank you.

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