



DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT AND ACTION PLAN

VI Young Americas Forum

For the Participation of Young People in the IX Summit of the Americas

Original: Spanish

Final version

This Declaration of Commitment and Action Plan present our contributions to the IX Summit of the Americas central theme, "Building a sustainable, resilient and equitable future", and by presenting our priorities, inputs and concerns on the Youth Development 5C's: Climate Change, COVID -19, Collaborating with Youth, Combating Corruption and Connectivity and Digital Transformation; These five priority axes are the result of the ongoing consultation process with the young people of the Western Hemisphere.

WE HIGHLIGHT,

That according to the World Economic Forum's 2021 Global Risks Report¹ we, young people, are experiencing our second major global crisis in a decade, facing challenges to our education, employment, economic prospects, and mental health; still, we continue to take action to advance the priority issues of our struggle and ensure that political leaders, organizations and more people join our movement.

In 2022, we, the young people of the hemisphere, express our concern about the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on health, the economy, and access to fundamental services in the most vulnerable sectors and in people in a situation of migration. We emphasize that the pandemic has generated obstacles in our professional development and job opportunities. Similarly, the pandemic has affected the mental health of young people; however, this issue is not yet a priority on government agendas: mental health crisis in most vulnerable sectors is still neglected.

At the same time, as youth we have expressed our concern about climate change, about the uncertainty regarding the future of the planet and about the time remaining before reaching a global environmental crisis; despite the fact that the effects of global warming are visible, such as the rise in sea level and temperature, the acidification of the oceans and the melting of glaciers, we believe that commitments for the climate and the implementation of concrete policies in all national, regional and international agendas are still lacking, so we focus our attention on the actions established by governments.

¹ 16th edition of the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report, available at: <https://es.weforum.org/reports/the-global-risks-report-2021>

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Likewise, in scope of the commitments made during the VIII Summit of the Americas for Democratic Governance, we urge the governments of the region to recognize the fight against corruption as a historic, important and urgent turning point to be addressed. We believe that there is still no effective promotion of political participation by youth: we see that political polarization is leaving youth leadership behind, prioritizing supporters of the system in power, so that youth policies are made invisible under agendas that do not meet our true needs. We express our concern of seeing ourselves limited to being political or electoral capital, given the lack of inclusive spaces for dialogue and participation in decision-making. We request more spaces to actively participate in the development of more sensitive public policies, with special focus on those that involve our development: in the field of education, job creation and entrepreneurship.

CONSIDERING:

The contributions of the 5,540 young participants, who through youth organizations and networks, in collaboration with public, private and civil society entities in their respective countries, took up the challenge and commitment to organize 168 on-site, virtual and hybrid Youth Dialogues, as well as 9,260 young people who participated to the virtual consultations, campaigns, policy labs, that were part of the preparatory process officially established in 2019 on the way to the VI Young Americas Forum in Los Angeles, California.

GIVING CREDIT:

To the young people who participated in the different stages of this process, through their opinions and contributions in response to each of the five Political Commitments for the IX Summit of the Americas, as well as the initiatives of the 11,800 entrepreneurs that, through the Entrepreneurship in Action programs, generated innovative and sustainable proposals on various topics such as: environment and environmental education, agriculture and nutrition, plastic waste reuse and recycling, renewable energy, manufacturing, trade and finance, health, biotechnology, water sanitation, creative industries, sports and ecotourism, information technologies, gender equality and reduction of social inequality; all of them contributing to the sustainable recovery of the region in a post-pandemic context.

ACTION PLAN: RESPONDING TO THE POLITICAL COMMITMENTS OF THE IX SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

The following are our proposals and requests focused on fulfilling the five Political Commitments of the IX Summit of the Americas: (1) Action Plan on Health and Resilience in the Americas; (2) Accelerating the Clean Energy Transition; (3) Our Green Future; (4) Regional Agenda for Digital Transformation and (5) Inter-American Action Plan on Democratic Governance.

Climate Change

Responding to the Political Commitments "Clean Energy and Our Green Future" of the IX Summit of the Americas

1. Clean Energy:

- 1.1.** We, young people, reiterate our interest in fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy. We believe that the development model based on the extraction of natural resources should be reviewed and rethought. We urge to rethink production processes and consumption models at a global level, and to implement practices that allow the sustainable use of mineral and energy resources, considering environmental, social and governance factors.
- 1.2.** We ask the governments to encourage research for the development and application of new energies in the region; to encourage investment and use of these technologies in a more inclusive way: to invest in renewable energy mechanisms both in industries and in homes, small and medium-sized enterprises. We are committed to collaborating on initiatives ensuring the access for all sectors to these technologies, including the development of biofuels.
- 1.3.** We propose to create a Young Americas Dialogue cluster, to be held quarterly in the cities, in innovative spaces where youth leaders, academia, government and private companies participate, to define the most urgent environmental needs of the region and to propose articulated solutions that are evaluated, scaled and taken into account at the national level and have international visibility; generate youth networks for climate change activism.

2. Sustainable cities and technologies:

- 2.1.** As native youth of the digital age, we live the benefits, but also the effects, of new technologies on our lives and on our Human Rights. As young people, we commit ourselves to oversee the environmental impact of the industries and technologies that we use in partnership with regulatory agencies, demanding the appropriate actions to remedy it, collaborating to solve challenges of access to environmental information in the face of the current climate crisis.

- 2.2.** We request increased financial support for projects that promote sustainable solutions to reduce pollution, and to encourage the development of technologies that contribute to preserving the environment through entrepreneurship. We call on State entities in partnership with companies to encourage the use of more sustainable transport models and to create projects for cities that allow us to promote pedestrian mobility and ecological transport, to the benefit of the environment and the health of the population. We are interested in strengthening the water sources of our cities through reforestation.
- 3. Carbon control:**

 - 3.1.** We urge the strengthening of measures to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions: we propose to promote reforestation and carbon management actions through regional programs that involve collective measures. We also propose projects to measure and report the carbon footprint generated by large industries.
 - 3.2.** It is urgent to stop the indiscriminate felling of forests and highlight the importance of protecting indigenous territories such as the Amazon and other relevant territories, as pillars in the fight against deforestation and other activities related to illicit economies that harm our ecosystems: such as drug trafficking and illegal mining.
- 4. Protection to ecosystems:**

 - 4.1.** We young people require a commitment on the part of companies towards the environment, as well as responsibility on the part of the States when creating and enforcing laws and public policies for the conservation of ecosystems. It is necessary to achieve and demonstrate verifiable results in the quality of life of populations.
 - 4.2.** We are committed to disseminating information and promoting education for tourism as a guide to avoid the deterioration of marine and land ecosystems due to this activity. At the same time, it is important to promote initiatives for the preservation of land and ocean biodiversity.
- 5. Water saving and sanitation:**

 - 5.1.** Climate change affects the hydrological cycle, causing serious alterations in our environment as human beings, such as the lack of access to drinking water and diseases related to water pollution: we must develop sustainable climate action projects focused on water saving and sanitation, to guarantee access and improve the quality of water and sewage services; as well as strengthening public policies regarding water in the communities, promoting responsible consumption and educating the population in co-responsibility with other sectors of society.
- 6. Environmental education:**

 - 6.1.** We are committed to promoting a circular economy, raising awareness of the impact of practices carried out on a daily basis on the environment, and being critical of the information on the origin of the products we consume; We require the governments

to spread greater awareness campaigns on waste management, to promote to a greater extent practices of collecting plastic waste and the harnessing of organic waste; As young entrepreneurs, we are committed to training ourselves on cleaner production tools to create sustainable businesses. We propose strategic alliances between countries to adopt technologies for waste processing and management.

- 6.2.** We propose a cross-sectional approach to environmental and sustainable education, to internalize environmental justice and solidarity: to integrate environmental conservation strategies and notions of responsible consumption into study plans, from basic levels, as well as a recognition system for those who carry out actions in favor of the environment. Long-term results of environmental education can be measured in daily activities such as the increase in the use of public transport, the reduction in the demand for single-use plastics, the increase in the demand for sustainable organic crops, among others.
- 6.3.** It is necessary to encourage technology-based enterprises that help solve social and ecological problems: we propose strategic partnership between countries to adopt and develop technologies for waste processing and management; We suggest creating an accessible fund for projects developed by women to reduce the effects of climate change, through sustainability activities in their communities. We urge greater inclusion of girls and women in study programs and careers with a STEM² focus, promoting their participation in scientific and technological work to face the challenges of climate change.

7. Food security to face climate change:

- 7.1.** As young people, we are interested in allying with and following up on entities and companies that have implemented climate actions and that are willing to support us with financing and training to develop sustainable agricultural projects, through programs that generate collective solutions for achieving food security; We propose to provide education in sustainable agriculture to population in general: consumers, producers, peasants, private and public entities, thus empowering people from the perspective of self-sufficiency. It is necessary to encourage existing sustainable agricultural education and training processes and promote programs according to the needs of our communities.
- 7.2.** We propose to encourage emerging small-scale agricultural initiatives that use traditional regenerative practices. This through associations of large companies with local agricultural projects and by supporting inter-scale associations that help smaller agricultural companies to integrate their value-added products in the international market, providing them with the initial investment necessary to comply with international standards.

² STEM is the abbreviation for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (as subjects of study).

Combating Corruption

Responding to the Political Commitment "Democratic Governance" of the IX Summit of the Americas

1. Youth leadership and participation:

- 1.1.** We call on governments to build and institutionalize scenarios of citizen participation, without political instrumentalization, where youth are included and are protagonists, through the articulation of networks of educational institutions, public and private, to include and strengthen those spaces that do not have a considerable reach due to their conditions and territorial contexts: the decentralization of spaces for debate and action strengthens the confidence and capacities of youth to confront corruption.
- 1.2.** We agree that it is still difficult to promote or channel proposals outside of political parties and institutional mechanisms for participation spaces, so it is necessary to promote dynamics of social program co-creation and government improvement from universities and other civic spaces, such as volunteer programs and laboratories aimed at young people in underserved communities. We propose to create a high-level internship program in state structures for young professionals, as well as educational programs that provide us with tools and specific knowledge about government structures and audit processes, preparing us to occupy decision-making spaces.

2. Quality education:

- 2.1.** It is necessary to develop youth political leadership through education, so we propose to reinforce content related to ethics, politics, government and humanities in the educational curriculum of all countries, as well as provide tools to combat corruption to the population, through the creation of citizen schools as an initiative of the civil sector; this without ceasing to include training in life and decision-making skills through programs aimed at young people and adolescents in situations of vulnerability.
- 2.2.** We are committed to actively participate in the elaboration of public policies, with special focus on those involving our development, such as educational policies: university autonomy must be considered essential to achieve quality education, while establishing quality standards for all Higher Education Institutions. We agree that access to quality education at all levels is a latent need in the region. Therefore, we propose to create an evaluation standard for the study centers of the hemisphere based on the principles of open government.
- 2.3.** As young people we can lay the foundation for stronger international partnerships that overcome political changes, so curricula must also incorporate virtual and face-to-face educational exchanges among institutions across the region. Including standardized international dialogue in educational curricula will ensure students' access to the benefits of global perspectives and collaborative relationships.

3. Human rights and multilateralism:

- 3.1.** We young people commit ourselves to promoting multiculturalism in institutional spaces. We urge governments to highlight the realities of indigenous and Afro-descendant youth from their intersectionalities of gender and sexual orientation; serve all young people without distinction of socioeconomic status, people with disabilities, young women and children, especially youth in rural areas and migrants, so that they do not remain in the informal sector. We call to create channels so that vulnerable groups with little access to digital connectivity can be heard.
- 3.2.** We urge governments to include commitments to existing migration regulation policies, in the stages of prevention, attention and return, from economic and political factors. The biggest challenge is to increase the guarantees of survival for migrants, to ensure the right to education for migrant children and to provide alternatives for legalization, security and basic rights. We request greater social protection and welfare conditions for people in a situation of human mobility, as well as promotional actions for labor insertion that take advantage of the abilities and skills of young migrants. We express our urgency to guarantee accessibility at all educational levels and to bring these opportunities to vulnerable populations, such as indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants.
- 3.3.** We commit ourselves to promoting international cooperation and multilateralism in security, trade and education: we propose to create youth policy nodes and border meetings around issues such as migration, innovation and international trade; we seek participation not only through the mechanisms of civil society, but also in the different spaces convened by the Entities, Organizations and Dependencies of the OAS.

4. Open Government as an anti-corruption strategy:

- 4.1.** Young people see with concern that impunity persists in acts of corruption, since it is encouraged by the States in multiple ways: it is frequently given by opportunities to profit through public money that should be used for goods and services. The role of the private sector is also important, so it is necessary to incorporate integrity and good- corporate-governance certifications in all types of companies in order to avoid acts of corruption.
- 4.2.** We propose the use of open data as a tool for social development and the design of better public policies: applying open government principles, through the publication of management indicators and the simplification of information access procedures. We demand from governments minimum standards of capacity and integrity for the exercise of public service, to strengthen the training and certification of public officials in management and control positions, as well as to implement training spaces in ethics and transparency

4.3. We young people commit ourselves to be observers and auditors in the public processes of resources for youth, as well as to promote the evaluation of the tangible and significant impact of state projects in our communities, for which we propose the creation of an observatory of youth in which technology tools are used to monitor the actions of interest in order to contribute to the fight against corruption. We also call on the States to encourage the rest of the citizenry to be controllers and guarantors in the management of public funds.

5. Eradication of corruption and violence:

5.1. We declare that it is urgent to highlight the constant violation of the fundamental Human Rights that young people, women, indigenous communities live in the region, as well as sexual and gender diversities, as an effect of corruption, impunity and discrimination in access to public services and in justice enforcement.

5.2. It is necessary to spotlight the violence that is exercised illegally from the States, which persists through formal institutions through forms such as harassment and persecution, illegal repression, torture and murder. We demand greater protection for people who report acts of corruption.

5.3. It is necessary to put an end to extractive activities that directly affect indigenous peoples and punish serious environmental damage: we propose to recognize at the international level the figure of "ecocide" as a crime before international bodies. At the same time, we urge States to take actions to protect environmental activists and indigenous peoples, as we recognize the violence that is exercised in a structural, systematic and intersectional manner. We urge governments to establish safe spaces and real guarantees for young leaders who denounce and make visible environmental crimes, rejecting impunity in the face of these. We propose to adopt the Earth Charter as an instrument of International Law and Democracy, to promote a culture of Non-Violence and Peace as a basis to eradicate the social and economic inequality that gives rise to violence.

Connectivity and Digital Transformation

Responding to the Political Commitment "Digital Transformation" of the IX Summit of the Americas

1. Reduce the digital gap:

1.1. The Post-COVID-19 scenario is an example of how young people have had to innovate and make a leap towards connectivity and the digitization of businesses and services. We believe that it is a task for governments to guarantee equal access to technology. It is necessary to recognize our Digital Rights, since there are still gaps in connectivity infrastructure in the countries of the region and internet access is still unequal. We propose a Digitization and Connectivity Plan that includes digital education aimed especially at vulnerable communities, as well as the expansion of connectivity in each country with the increase of Wi-Fi networks, optical fiber and the corresponding

physical infrastructure. All this, through agreements between governments and private companies.

- 1.2.** We ask for incentives for projects that use technological development as a tool to favor the accessibility and efficiency of basic services and as a means to favor production and employability. Entrepreneurship programs with an emphasis on encouraging telecommuting will allow young people to join the labor market, closing economic, social and gender gaps.
- 1.3.** We also propose the creation of digital applications for communication in the Americas, which promote the strengthening of labor and academic actions throughout the hemisphere by the means of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), considering areas of difficult access, allowing to integrate the social sector in its different rural, urban and peri-urban areas. This in order to reduce the digital divide through education, especially in vulnerable communities and indigenous populations that practice agriculture.
- 1.4.** Companies have reinvented themselves and adapted their business models, which is why we reiterate the importance of providing digital literacy programs from childhood: promoting Digital Literacy processes in the entire population, particularly young people. The foregoing in a partnership between educational institutions, civil society organizations and the media, led by the States. We commit to promoting the formalization of work and commerce, for which we propose incentives for the computerization of businesses, as well as advancing to hybrid models that take advantage of the technologies that were implemented during the pandemic.
- 1.5.** We require policies for the creation of job opportunities, financing options for youth entrepreneurship and comprehensive education in the current context of employment and technological development. For this reason, we propose to focus training and curricula on the use of Industry 4.0 technologies: that schools and colleges teach robotics and programming skills; that universities promote skills for the development of Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data. It is also necessary to strengthen accounting and financial skills in school programs, aimed at entrepreneurship. For this we propose to create and promote platforms that accompany the vocational guidance of students according to the needs of the labor market. The foregoing with a gender perspective and non-discrimination.

2. Security and transparency in the use of data:

- 2.1.** We call to strengthen digital security and the ethical use of data, both at the level of data management and in the prevention of cyberbullying. We also propose creating spaces for digital education based on the cybersecurity component, since the lack of expertise in this area impacts the security of Latin American countries.
- 2.2.** Likewise, we propose to implement technological methods that allow transparent access to state information on accountability, such as the implementation of Blockchain and Big Data technology in public administration.

COVID-19

Responding to the Political Commitment "Health and Resilience" of the IX Summit of the Americas

1. Solidarity-based economic recovery:

- 1.1.** The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult to acquire goods and services, mainly affecting the most vulnerable sectors of the population: women, children and adolescents, especially from indigenous peoples. Given this, we believe that the reactivation of industries must be based on solidarity: we propose to follow up on programs to promote collaborative economy projects with a gender perspective, to integrate the different actors and sectors of the productive chains and strengthen local enterprises; we must make small and medium-sized companies visible, promoting associativity, fair and sustainable trade through inclusive, cooperative and decentralized public policies.
- 1.2.** It is necessary to assess the impact of the pandemic from a gender perspective: confinement put young women and girls at greater risk of violence, due to the increase in school dropout, lack of access to medical services and the cultural burden of domestic and care tasks: it is necessary to implement new safety and support programs for affected women and girls.
- 1.3.** COVID-19 has also widened the gender gap in earning opportunities: employment policies must consider domestic and caregiving dynamics to motivate young women to continue working. Reducing the gender gap in entrepreneurship is more important than ever to create jobs and spur innovation in a post-COVID-19 world, which is why we propose to create training and support platforms for entrepreneurship among young women.

2. Hygiene and disease prevention:

- 2.1.** We commit ourselves to promoting sustainable initiatives to ensure access to drinking water for communities and to promote hygiene measures and the rational use of water as a basis for preventing infectious diseases.

3. Proposals for post-pandemic mental health:

- 3.1.** The pandemic affected the mental health of young people, especially those who live in countries in social and political conflict. It is urgent to make visible suicide, depression, stress, anxiety, among other psychological pathologies in youth, derived from their losses and confinement, which will have long-term effects on our families and communities. We must promote comprehensive programs and build a post-COVID-19 mental health policy, through open and collaborative platforms, developing inclusive communication strategies regarding mental health, ensuring the incorporation of content on managing emotions in all programs education in the region.

- 3.2.** In addition to expanding the coverage of health systems in terms of immunization, prevention and care for diseases, public policies are required that guarantee easy access to mental health services for any person. We propose to include mental health care as a priority issue in the regional agenda, so that sufficient budgets are allocated to it by the States.
- 3.3.** As youth, we commit ourselves to promoting initiatives and campaigns that guarantee free or low-cost access to well-being and stress management techniques. We also propose to value and support the ancestral knowledge of our communities, as alternative solutions to the effects caused by COVID-19, as well as its aftermath.
- 4. Opportunities for youth after COVID-19:**

 - 4.1.** The pandemic not only generated immediate and serious effects on work and income, but it has drastically accelerated digitization and automation processes: companies reinvented their business models. As young people, we prioritize spaces for dialogue about the future of work after this pandemic. There is still a lack of policies that support productive activities, decent work, entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation and formalization, to generate educational inclusion in vulnerable communities, promoting training and visualizing youth participation in the formal economy. Given the increase in youth unemployment and the precariousness of existing jobs, we call on governments to carry out the educational and labor reforms necessary for better and greater access to work through education in coordination with the global labor market.
 - 4.2.** As young people, we are committed to strengthening the use of spaces for citizen participation guided by peers, in order to create a network of young people with a social purpose, as well as promoting the use of networks for research purposes to update our regions. We propose the creation of groups trained to identify young people in vulnerable situations and help them find educational and employment opportunities. We call for public-private partnerships to create greater employment opportunities for youth as an alternative to migration.
 - 4.3.** The percentage of youth unemployment should decrease with the support of programs for the formalization of entrepreneurships. We propose a commercial formalization campaign through incentives and streamlining bureaucratic procedures, in which HUBs and incubators are the key spaces to ensure the implementation of a business idea, as a strategy to alleviate poverty. These spaces should be implemented in universities and government agencies focused on youth.
 - 4.4.** The pandemic made it clear that there is a link between the ability to obtain employment and the possibility of obtaining an adequate level of education: although online resources have increased due to the pandemic, many young people in vulnerable situations continue to lack access to technology to access resources and opportunities to learn online. This coupled with an outdated educational system. After the pandemic, we need to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities

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of young people, highlighting that the vulnerable population needs access to continuing education in the digital age to strengthen their job skills.