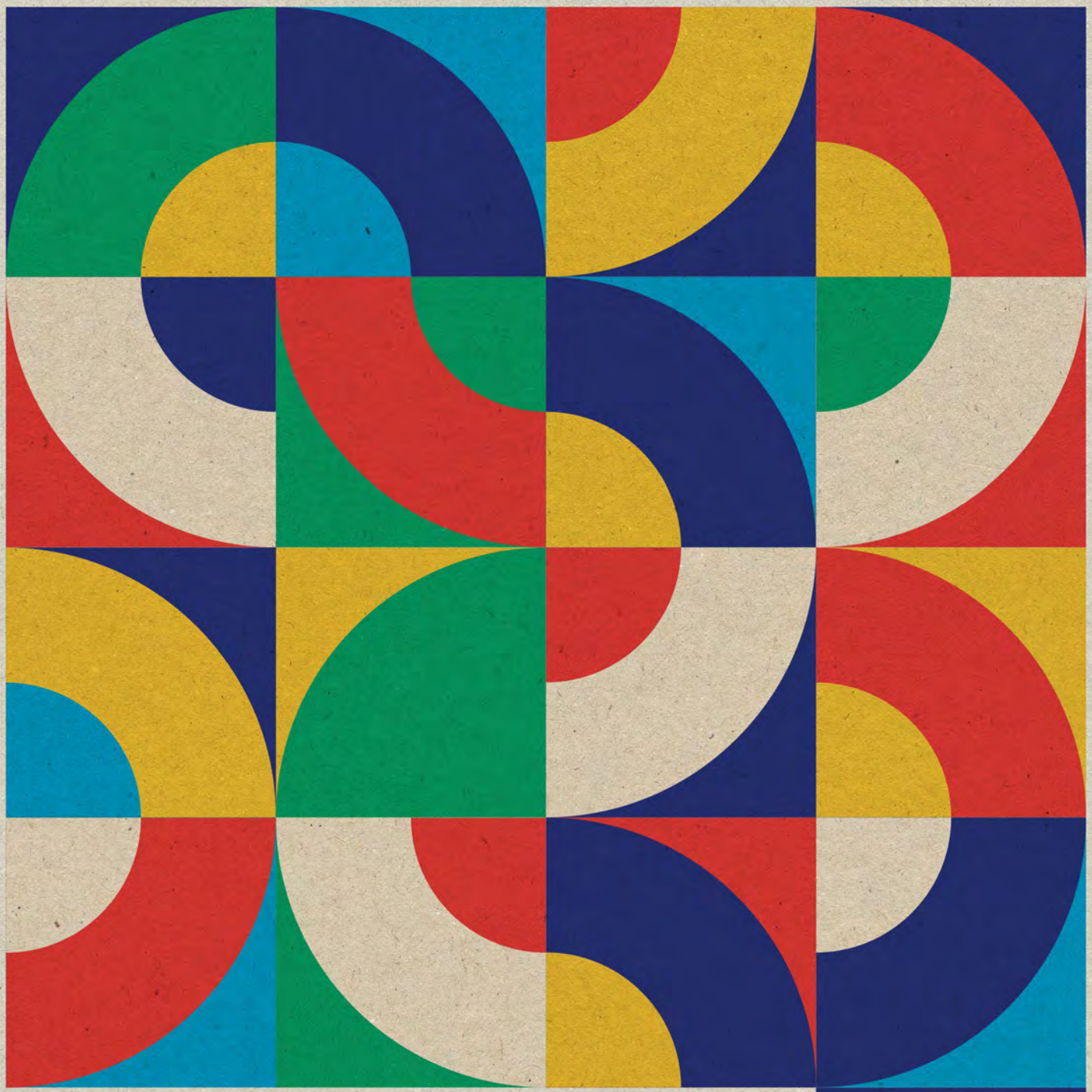
THE AMERICAS IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY: IN SEARCH OF A NEW AGENDA

IX SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS | LOS ANGELES · 2022



EL COLEGIO DE MÉXICO

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EXECUTIVE REPORT

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
Celac	Community of Latin American and the Caribbean States
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
ILO	International Labour Organization
Ilpes	Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JSWG	Joint Summit Working Group
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
OAS	Organization of American States.
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
RCM	Regional Conference on Migration
SOA	Summit of the Americas
SIRG	The Summit Implementation Review Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
Unicef	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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PREFACE

THIS REPORT PRESENTS a plural, non-governmental, Latin American perspective on priority issues for the Americas, with a roadmap for medium- and long-term strategies for the region to rise to its current challenges. In harmony line with the timeframe guiding the multilateral process of the Summit of the Americas, it proposes a three-yearly strategic focus on the main shared challenges at this juncture of the greatest global uncertainty of the past three decades, when there is more disjointedness than dialogue at a regional level.

The ideas set out in this document are the result of consultations, conversations, dialogue, and workshops organized by El Colegio de México in coordination with Universidad Torcuato Di Tella and the Universidad de los Andes, together with the participation of dozens of academic experts, diplomats, and civil society representatives from different Latin American and Caribbean countries.

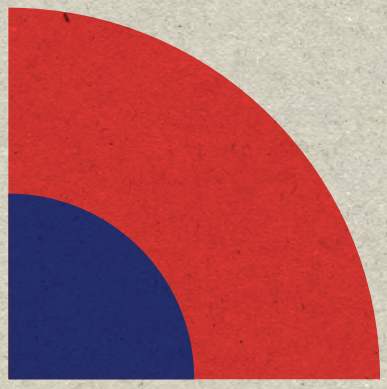
Between March and May 2022, seven virtual workshops addressed topics affecting and interconnecting the Americas from an Inter-American, Latin American, and subregional perspective. These sessions culminated in an in-person gathering in Buenos Aires, hosted by the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, with the participation of leading Latin American experts in international relations. These rounds of dialogue aimed to join up different national, sectoral, and disciplinary approaches to the region's urgent challenges and produced proposals for possible responses, all in the interest of improving communication among American nations. The specific objective was to stimulate debate on how to improve dialogue between Latin America and the Caribbean with the United States.

These efforts shall continue and expand throughout 2022, enriched by applied research and meetings to follow-up on the results of the Ninth Summit of the Americas, incorporating additional voices from civil society and academia as the basis for a more comprehensive text that deepens and systematizes the agenda for the Americas outlined in this report.

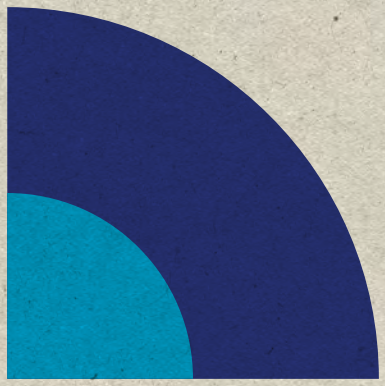
This Executive Report is therefore the initial stage of an ongoing project. Given the scant public awareness of an original agenda on behalf of the United States or consulted by its peers in Latin America and the Caribbean, we decided to contribute an annotated agenda to spark constructive dialogue and invite governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to help activate, as a matter of urgency, collaborative spaces and collective actions in the Americas, applying the principles of diversity and plurality.

KEY MESSAGES

CHRONIC INEQUALITIES internally and between countries throughout the Americas is an Achilles' heel for our region. The Summits should make it a top priority to close these inequality gaps, placing social issues at the center of the hemispheric agenda.



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION is no longer the sole responsibility of governments. Social actors now play a key role in understanding problems, and for the design and implementation solutions. Their views, participation, and empowerment are essential.



CONNECTING MULTILATERAL spaces and government actions to citizen needs, demands, and new subjectivities requires democratizing the channels of communication and representation in the Americas. Democracy's health depends on this connection between civil society and decision-makers.

INTRODUCTION

THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS (SOA) is the only multilateral forum for heads of state in the hemisphere and therefore in principle it is a venue for all countries in the region. Established in 1994 as a US initiative in order to activate and strengthen dialogue among the nations in the Americas, it was forged in the heat of the liberal consensus of the post-Cold War period of the 1990s. A total of eight Summits have since been hosted in different capital cities, attended by high-level government figures along with representatives from social organizations and movements committed to specific topics on the agenda involving the United States, Canada and countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.[1]

Participation and representation at the Summit have always been variable. Since the outset, Cuba's inclusion or exclusion has been a recurring source of controversy. It was not invited for the first six gatherings due to its political regime and its exclusion of the OAS since 1962,[2] but it did participate in the last two events after its expulsion from the inter-American system was reversed (2009) and when the Obama administration moved toward a gradual normalization of diplomatic relations (2015). The representativeness peaked at the inclusive gathering in Panama in 2015 with Cuba's attendance, and the highest level of government representation since 1994.[3] However, three years later, the situation changed and participation reached its lowest point in 2018 with President Trump's absence from the last meeting in Lima and the drop in the number of heads of state in attendance.[4] In 2022, the issue of the forum's inclusiveness will remain an issue for as long as an open and constructive dialogue does not take place.

In addition to inter-governmental consultations and gatherings of heads of state, the Summit has evolved toward a multilateral process with a certain level of continuity, rooted in a technical secretariat within the OAS. Steps have been taken to institutionalize channels of participation, dialogue, and monitoring in collaboration with other stakeholders such as specialized entities, universities, think tanks and civil society organizations. This is undoubtedly a sign of progress. However, it fails to sufficiently transcend the design, implementation, and monitoring of initiatives promoted by governments and by the existing network of institutions working on cooperation issues.

Each individual Summit has been defined by its core themes, attendees (and absentees), issues of the time, and apparent conflicts and agreements. Results have been non-linear and varied. In the 1990s, two main ideas dominated the narrative and strategic consensus: free trade and democracy. While the former has faded from view completely with the Mar del Plata meeting (2005), the latter culminated in the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001), today the object of controversy in its interpretation. Over the course of the 21st century, the agenda has become more diffuse and disjointed to extend to incorporate other areas—security,

1 1st SOA Miami, United States (1994); 2nd SOA Santiago de Chile, Chile (1998); 3rd SOA Quebec, Canada (2001); Special SOA, Monterrey, Mexico (2004); 4th SOA Mar del Plata, Argentina (2005); 5th SOA Puerto España, Trinidad and Tobago (2009); 6th SOA Cartagena, Colombia (2012); 7th SOA Panama City, Panama; 8th SOA Lima, Peru (2018).

2 In 1962, the 6th Resolution of the 8th Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs excluded the Cuban government from participating in the inter-American system on the grounds that "the adherence by any member of the Organization of American States to Marxism-Leninism is incompatible with the inter-American system."

3 In attendance at the 8th Summit were 34 presidents and prime ministers, and one foreign minister.

4 This meeting was attended by the Cuban Foreign Minister, Ecuador's Vice-President, Guatemala's Vice-President, El Salvador's Foreign Minister, Paraguay's Foreign Minister, two representatives from Venezuela's national assembly (Maduro was not invited), and Vice-President Mike Pence represented the United States.

social, environmental, economic, human rights, justice, and health—but without a shared, overarching narrative and/or strategic vision to help facilitate alignment and continue working in the same direction, or to set priorities.

The Summits' priorities have always been connected to global contexts and regional stages. Host countries have left their mark and given particular emphases to each meeting. The results have varied according to the level of consensus achieved and participants' political commitment. In particular since 2005, the Summits have gradually lost their ability to establish a central theme, generate reasonable confluences, or be responsive to the claims of civil society demands. The general sense before the upcoming meeting in Los Angeles was already marked by a certain sense of paralysis, deterioration, and disinterest. This trend has an effect, to varying extents, on most systems of regional integration and agreement, and reflects the increasing fragmentation of Latin American and the Caribbean, and the relative distancing of Canada and the United States.

At this forum, the US narrative regarding Latin America and the Caribbean has shifted over the years, determined by current affairs, the region's role within the superpower's broader foreign policy objectives, and the particular president's level of interest in the event. The First SOA in 1994 was part of the Clinton administration's overarching strategy of "engagement plus enlargement" to promote the market economy and political pluralism with an assertive offer of trade liberalization that would be attractive for countries in the region. By contrast, the gatherings held in the 21st century are part of the US "primacy" strategy since the attacks of 11 September 2001 to contain the threats of terrorism or the emergence of another superpower of similar stature. George W. Bush gave this primacy a military edge, Barack Obama recalibrated it through diplomacy, and Donald Trump turned it into a unilateralism and coercion. In each case, however, Latin America and the Caribbean remained backstage. The lowest point in terms of interest and dialogue came at the Eighth Summit in 2018, as the first time a US president failed to attend.

The meeting in Los Angeles could be interpreted as a sign of the current US administration's potential interest and political commitment to revive dialogue with Latin American and Caribbean countries. However, the Biden presidency shows a weakened primacy both for domestic and external reasons. The United States currently does not have its house "in order" with stark bipartisan dissent on foreign policy that prevents the country from making a sufficiently attractive offer for the region in terms of official development aid, infrastructure investments, trade, healthcare cooperation, and migration management.

We must be realistic and recognize the fragility of this new attempt to rekindle dialogue given current global uncertainty, regional fragmentation, and political polarization. Inaccurate or hasty reading of the complexity of this juncture could lead to the loss of the unique opportunity presented by the Los Angeles gathering to reformulate a convincing and shared agenda for the future. A joined-up effort is required to produce alternative and innovative answers to our social, economic, and political challenges in order to prevent a further deepening of fractures and divergences between the North and the South of the Americas.

This Summit offers possibilities and spaces to bring together nations of the Americas after a period of regional disagreements, neglect, and lack of coordination that compounded the inadequate collective responses to the pandemic and its social, economic, and environmental consequences. Open channels of communication and cooperation are more urgent than ever, given the deteriorating situations and growing overlaps of problems affecting all countries of the Americas, regardless of their size, development level, type of government, or political leaning. Collaboration is essential for collective, concrete, and viable responses. This is a time of sowing, not reaping.

The benefits of cooperation and the costs of non-cooperation vary depending on individual topics and current events. For most of the priority issues outlined here—extreme poverty and inequality, food crises, and the unprecedented presence of transnational crime—the lack of progress on joint solutions may prove very costly for all parties. Where should we start? A first step would be to sound the alarm.

This document emphasizes a sense of urgency in the design of collective actions for the short, medium, and long terms in order to prevent a continued worsening of social, economic, and political conditions in the Americas and to realign inter-American relations. If we want the Ninth Summit to be a useful step toward achieving a shared cooperation agenda, participants must act with constructive pragmatism and make an extra effort to address said urgencies. Otherwise, the complex economic, social, political, environmental, and security realities facing our nations, both in the North and in the South, will continue to deteriorate and create situations that erode confidence in democracy and undermine the credibility of cooperation pledges.

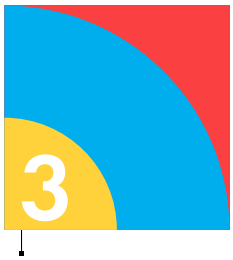
The time when governments had a virtually exclusive responsibility and influence over international cooperation is consigned to the past. The education, information, and communication that have accompanied globalization involve more and more stakeholders in society, affecting foreign relations, the understanding of problems, and the implementation of solutions. This report hopes to contribute to a multinational, multisectoral, inclusive, and co-responsible approach.

The text begins with a Latin American perspective on the current global context and its implications for the ongoing rebalancing of global power. The first section addresses the main aspects of the current situation around the world and the most relevant agenda for the Americas, considering the varied national realities across the continent today. This is followed by some general ideas and possible strategies on how to integrate inter-American relations as part of broader global geopolitical issues, as a means of mitigating their disruptive effects at a regional level that hinder dialogue and impede intergovernmental coordination.

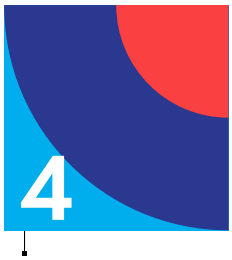
The second section proposes an annotated agenda for the Americas for the next three years, the time frame within which the Summit operates. We can highlight four core themes and narratives:

Urgent issues: inequality, health, humanitarian aid, and development cooperation.

Strategic areas for sustainability: economic and infrastructure recovery, the environment, and energy transition.



New approaches to priorities: democracy and human rights, migration and security.



Improving inter-institutional dialogue and cooperation: the necessary expansion of discussions among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to strengthen the institutions that promote cooperation.

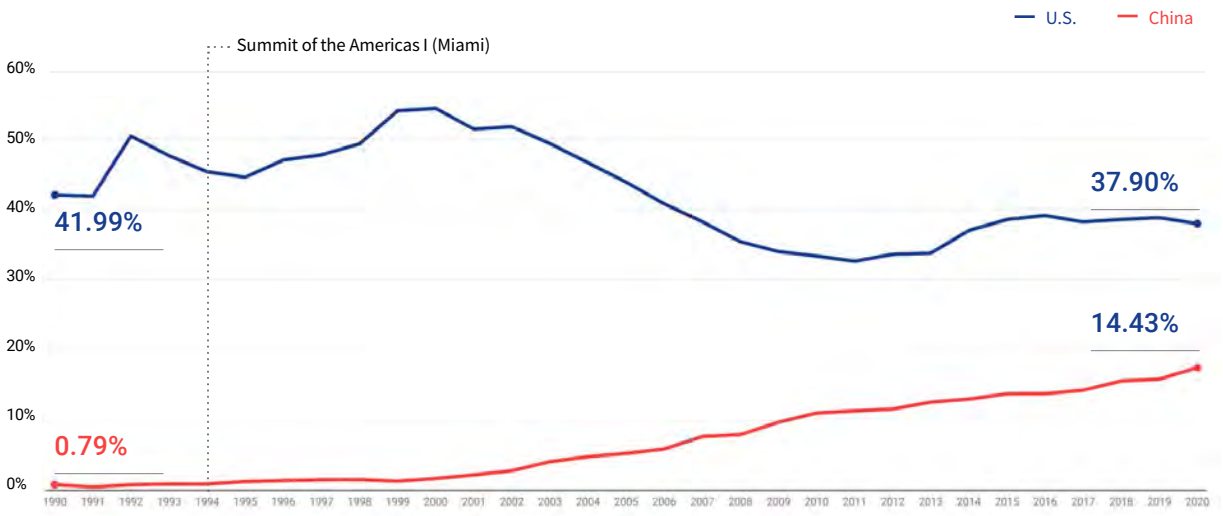
This report concludes with a section outlining suggestions and lines of action to prepare the ground for dialogue, inspiring ideas to be cultivated in order for them to bear fruit in the future.

GLOBAL CONTEXT AND AGENDA

EXTRA-REGIONAL EVENTS become benchmarks in the agenda that shapes the dialogue among 35 countries in a continent that is constantly interacting with the rest of the world. Shifting international power balances have rapidly evolved in recent decades. In the space of just three decades, we have witnessed the end of the Cold War, the emergence of a multipolar political and economic global order, along with a cycle of globalization that appears to be coming to a close. It is important to assess the extent of the change rather than the details of each phenomenon.

A gulf exists between the 1990s' liberal consensus that inspired the first Summit of the Americas in 1994 and the global context of uncertainty and increasing conflict surrounding the event in Los Angeles in 2022. We are witnesses to a global system weighed down by contradictions, disagreements, pressures, and dilemmas due to the accumulation of crises simultaneously and on multiple geopolitical, health, economic, social, political, and environmental fronts. This unprecedented and complex situation requires a new conceptual and strategic approach. The system's dysfunctionality and current strains can be observed in four areas: international, global, institutional, and domestic.

U.S. and China Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean's foreign trade
(% on total trade, 1990-2020)



Source: UN Comtrade based.

* Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

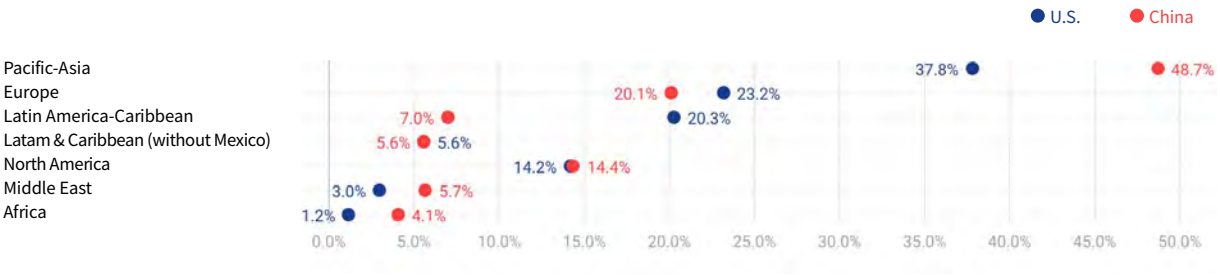
NOTE: Estimates of U.S and China trade participation in Latin Americas foreign trade due to lack of complete systematic data. In the U.S case, it considers 88% of 558 observations within 18 countries providing data; for China, 87% of 465 observations within 15 countries.

In terms of specifically interstate, and international relations, the fundamental issue has been the accelerating redistribution of power, wealth, and influence of the West and Global North over the East and Global South, causing tensions and geopolitical realignments. China's rise as an economic powerhouse is the most relevant

of such structural shifts in power in every sense. Nonetheless, even here we must avoid using old frameworks when considering new relations. Although the United States has defined China as a "strategic competitor, major differences exist in regard to the situation that led to the Cold War-era policy of blocs and zones of influence. Failing to acknowledge this fact may prove costly to the world order and to those Latin American and Caribbean nations that might find themselves caught up in the middle of a global dispute and thus limited in their ability to diversify and insert themselves within the global economy.

The last two decades have seen significant growth in economic relations and cooperation between China and nations in Latin America and the Caribbean. These are mainly bilateral relations without political agreements or multilateral structures beyond the China-CELAC Forum. China also provides investment, infrastructure, and high-tech solutions. The economic relationship with China has diversified trade and investment of Latin American and Caribbean countries, and increased their outreach towards member countries of the ASEAN and other regional groupings in Asia—an important factor when considering links to that part of the world. Equally, we must examine and respond to the negative repercussions that come from China's emergence [as a global power], such as reprimarization, decreased industrial activity, and extractivism with its environmental consequences.

U.S. and China's foreing trade by region
(% on total trade, 2020)



Source: UN Comtrade.

The important issue is that despite the potential for differentiated risks and opportunities posed by China's ascent being the most transcendental shift in the world order in recent decades, there has been minimal collective reflection, research, or discussions among Latin American and Caribbean nations, the United States, and Canada on the subject. This presents an area of opportunity to be explored.

The global political economy not only comprises conventional state actors but also non-governmental bodies: large multinational corporations, financial institutions, credit rating agencies, NGOs, transnational movements, and even criminal organizations and illegal circuits. Within this framework, globalization has been the essential process that has defined global politics in recent decades. However, whereas until the late 1990s globalization was equated with wealth due to its various achievements and its many promises, from the dawn of the 21st century and particularly since the financial crisis of 2008–2009, it has become associated with job insecurity, deindustrialization, household indebtedness, and the gradual erosion of the welfare state. Rising inequality lies at the heart of this sensation of insecurity, as borne out by several reports and studies. Therefore, it is unsurprising to see an increasing number of urban, global protest movements, domestic polarization, and an upsurge in nationalism in countries, in both the Global North and South.

Despite the slow-down of economic globalization, technology continues to accelerate, deepening the recessive and disruptive effects of global value chains triggered by the Covid-19 health crisis and, more recently, by the war in Ukraine. In addition to these worldwide changes and events, we can also refer to global environmental and climate crises, the rapid spread of digital technology, and the varying rates in countries' energy transition processes. And, finally, since 2020 we have been confronted by the vast scale of human, economic, and social losses due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated old problems and created new challenges. It is also now harder to access resources for an equitable economic recovery to go hand-in-hand with a transformation in production and consumption for sustainable development. Conversely, the planet's digitalization is gaining speed across multiple channels and transnational interconnection circuits. Digital technology and cyberspace propose unprecedented challenges as spaces of competition, polarization, and inequality, at the same time as they allow new forms of participation and effective instruments to tackle social, health, education, and environmental deficits.

At an institutional level, we can refer to various types of multilateral organizations and the series of liberal, postwar regimes that remain relevant even though various states and societies are now questioning them. The lack of UN Security Council reforms, the difficulties facing the World Trade Organization, the weakening of the European Union following Brexit, and the failures of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and G-20 countries to coordinate rapid and effective responses for a multilateral institutional architecture in dire straits and needing root-and-branch reforms. The nationalism of vaccine programs, the failure of the international anti-drug regime, the widespread frustration with Responsibility to Protect (R2P), the ongoing double standards in the principle of nuclear non-proliferation, the global paralysis in the face of effective commitments to environmental issues, and global powers' gradual loss of interest in development issues, have all combined to strengthen the perception of an ineffective multilateralism disconnected from citizen needs on a vast range of issues. This is worrying because organizations, regulations, and multilateral agreements are important to generate certainty and stability through mechanisms of coordination and consent.

Finally, in the area of domestic affairs, the most concerning issue is the state of democracy. In recent years, and in various countries, there has been spreading disenchantment with liberal democracy, and attempts at majoritarian and participative democracy are failing with increasing frequency. Plutocracies and kleptocracies are on the rise in more-or-less established democracies. Autocratic and authoritarian regimes are everywhere. Promises of "springs," "seasons," and "colors" are widely proclaimed before swiftly collapsing. Whether it is in response to calls for greater security, health, or market-friendly concessions, formal or substantive democracy ends up giving up ground. Whereas the 1990s promised a new wave of democratization, the past decade has seen this progress toward democracy slow down and even go into reverse.

In addition to the aforesaid structural changes, we can also refer to the extreme volatility after the collapse of the basic principles of the international principle of respect for States' territorial sovereignty and humanitarian protection following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Whatever the reasons for this invasion, at the United Nations most countries condemned this action. Nations in the Americas also rejected the use of force and the violation of sovereignty and international law through the General Assembly Resolution (March 2, 2022), with a regulation-based Latin American emphasis on peaceful resolution and humanitarian aid.

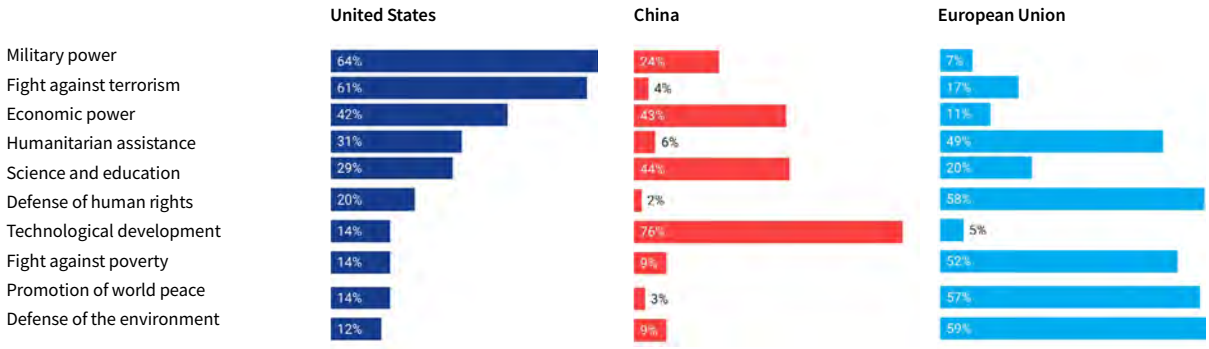
Views differ in regard to the reach and efficacy of sanctions as a strategy to apply pressure on the Russian government, given their effect on the general population and the global economy. Today, certain wars may be limited in their territorial impact but not in their potentially widespread economic, political, and social ramifications. As a result, many countries in the region worry about the conflict's indefinite escalation and prolongation, a situation that may slow down the economic recovery after the ravages of the pandemic, and even worse, may completely reorient global attention—especially of the United States—towards thorny issues of international security. The Americas are directly and simultaneously affected by the invasion of Ukraine, given

the increase in debt cost and financing, imports, energy, food, as well as the disruption of supply chains and spiraling global inflation. Yet, this should not be read as the preamble to a continent-wide political alignment based on past references. These phenomena have different political implications and perspectives for the countries and subregions that make up the Inter-American space. Such heterogeneity and complexity must be considered when adopting shared positions. Another cause for concern is the negative security effects of generalized global rearmament.

In short, we are facing new situations that require political creativity in the countries of the Americas to meet the challenge of large-scale changes around the world. If the greatest challenge is to connect decision-makers with their respective citizens, it is worth considering how Latin American societies are perceiving these changes. Recent public opinion surveys such as Grupo Diálogo y Paz and *Nueva Sociedad*[5] indicate that the perception in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rebalancing of world powers tends to be moving away from a binary vision of a growing conflict-driven bipolarity, and towards an emergent multipolarity with differentiated international leaderships.

World Leadership

Between the United States, China, and the European Union, wich do you consider to be the world leader in each of the following aspects? (%)



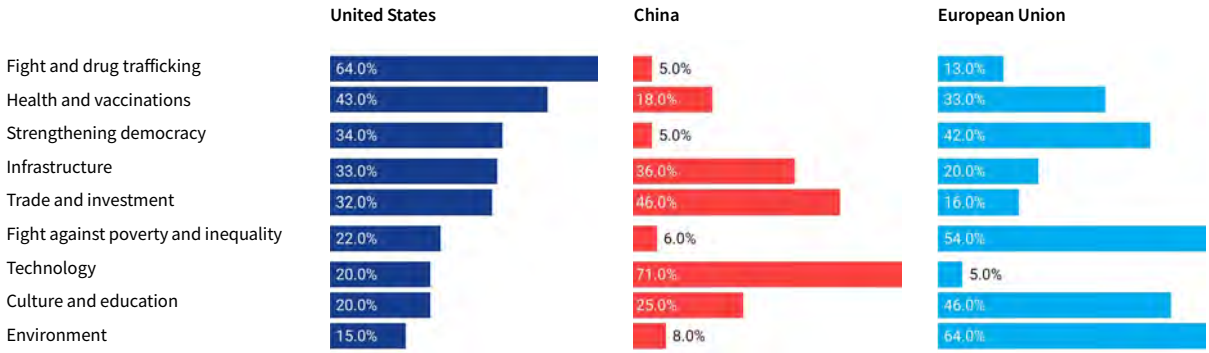
Source: Latin America-European Union, “miradas, agendas y expectativas”; Latinobarómetro, New Society Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, September-October 2021; results available at: https://datanuso.org

Latin Americans are open to establishing differentiated associations of cooperation with various global power centers based on the issue in question. Given regional diversity, there is less appetite for fixed alignments (North-South, South-South, West-the rest of the world), than for a pragmatic approach designed to deliver practical and flexible coalitions that meet people’s daily problems. A diplomacy of variable geometric forms.

5 Latin America - European Union: views, agendas and expectations”; Latinobarómetro, Fundación Nueva Sociedad, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, September–October 2021; results available at: https://data.nuso.org/en

Best partner by area

Who will be the best partner for your country in the following areas? (%)



Source: Latin America-European Union, "miradas, agendas y expectativas"; Latinobarómetro, New Society Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, September-October 2021; results available at: https://datanuso.org

Specific aspects of the Americas are potential strengths when redesigning, together, a brighter future at these uncertain times. The region of the Americas is a geopolitical space that enjoys peaceful interstate relations and it is home to a cluster of multilateral institutions operating on the basis of good neighbor policies and the principles of international law. Latin America and the Caribbean have constituted a denuclearized zone for over six decades, and its nations develop confidence-building measures to resolve territorial disputes. No international terrorist networks or activities are perceived as posing security threats to the region. Furthermore —despite the political and ideological divergences among countries of the Americas—an underlying perception exists that public opinion in the region is more favorable to friendly relations than elsewhere in the world.

THE AGENDA FOR THE AMERICAS: THREE KEY YEARS AHEAD

DESPITE SHIFTS AND DEVELOPMENTS in the current world order, the US dialogue with Latin America and the Caribbean is at one of its lowest points since the end of the Cold War. Increased ideological polarization both in the United States and in Latin America is compounded by a lack of constructive leadership with political commitment, ongoing interest, and a convincing narrative ability to generate dialogue and effective consensus at a regional level. Most countries appear bogged down by domestic issues, without the interest or incentives to join forces to confront global upheaval.

In the United States, the demands of domestic politics cause strategic and bureaucratic inertia, a tendency that in recent years has tipped the balance towards unilateral responses and traditional bilateral approaches when dealing with the country's southern neighbors. In the case of clearly defined interests and designated resources—such as Central American migration or the war against drugs in Colombia—the United States automatically chooses a bilateral response; few efforts are made to coordinate region-wide initiatives. Past inertia seems to be clouding current challenges and future visions.

In the past, new narratives and efforts to coordinate responses in the Americas flowed southward from the United States. In the last two decades, however, the United States and Washington's high-level decision-makers have been distracted, unengaged, and absent from meetings on Latin American and the Caribbean issues and many other topics on the Inter-American agenda. In the continent's South, Latin American regionalism is at a low ebb, and the political and ideological differences among the region's governments limit the agreements, the articulation of a common agenda, and a shared voice. This is clearly reflected in the erratic evolution and current diminished status of the Summit.

Two syndromes have become established in the Americas that trap dialogue and lower the capacity of collective action at an inter-American level. On the one hand, the US attitude to Latin America has been notable for a kind of "frustrated superpower syndrome." Despite existing within its immediate area of influence, Latin America and the Caribbean is considered a secondary region that receives only sporadic and selective attention from decision-makers when there are regional disputes, the presence of extra-regional actors, or domestic political issues at stake. Therefore, the bureaucratic policies are noted for their recurrence and invariability. In fact, the United States as a global superpower has neither the will nor the commitment to reconsider or reorient its relations with the region. For its part, Latin America has also suffered from the "failed unity syndrome." Different moments and with various leaders have inspired waves of inspiration for associations, spawning regional forums, mechanisms, and organizations to meld together divergent interests within a common framework. However, a set of global, continental, and national conditions severely hamper any possibility of progress; the new regional institutions weaken, and the end result is more rather than less fragmentation. In this way, the failed efforts and haphazard agglomeration of various programs undermine the capacity for collective action.

Furthermore, there are two contrasting situations currently at play: the geopolitical strategies of high-level US decision-makers—public and military institutions, Democrats and Republicans, education centers, and think tanks—prompted by the increasing competition between the United States and China, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the expansion of NATO, the future of energy, cyberspace, and the proliferation of hot spots around the world. Meanwhile, in Latin American and the Caribbean, the delicate economic and political situation, the faltering healthcare systems, the exacerbation of sources of instability and volatility, and the lack of development

models to ensure a balance between growth, justice, and the environment has led to a situation in which, in the eyes of governments and civil society, prioritizes an approach centered on development problems.

The panorama described raises the question of how to begin to unpick these syndromes and logics that discouraged coordination and dialogue in the Americas at the time when collective responses are more necessary than ever. An initial step would be to promote deliberative, horizontal, bottom-up dynamics through civil society initiatives. It is within this context that the 9th SOA, as a multilateral forum, acquires relevance by offering opportunities and spaces for civil societies within various countries across the continent (business groupings, civil society organizations, universities, think tanks, scientific communities) can have a greater impact on constructing the cooperation agenda. Below we propose some ideas in this regard. It is essential to note that, from the analytical perspective of our report, inequalities are the core issue for the hemisphere to address. At the same time, it suggess the need to connect various issues and priority topics for the cooperation agenda in the Americas, since these are deeply interconnected subjects and create vicious and virtuous circles.

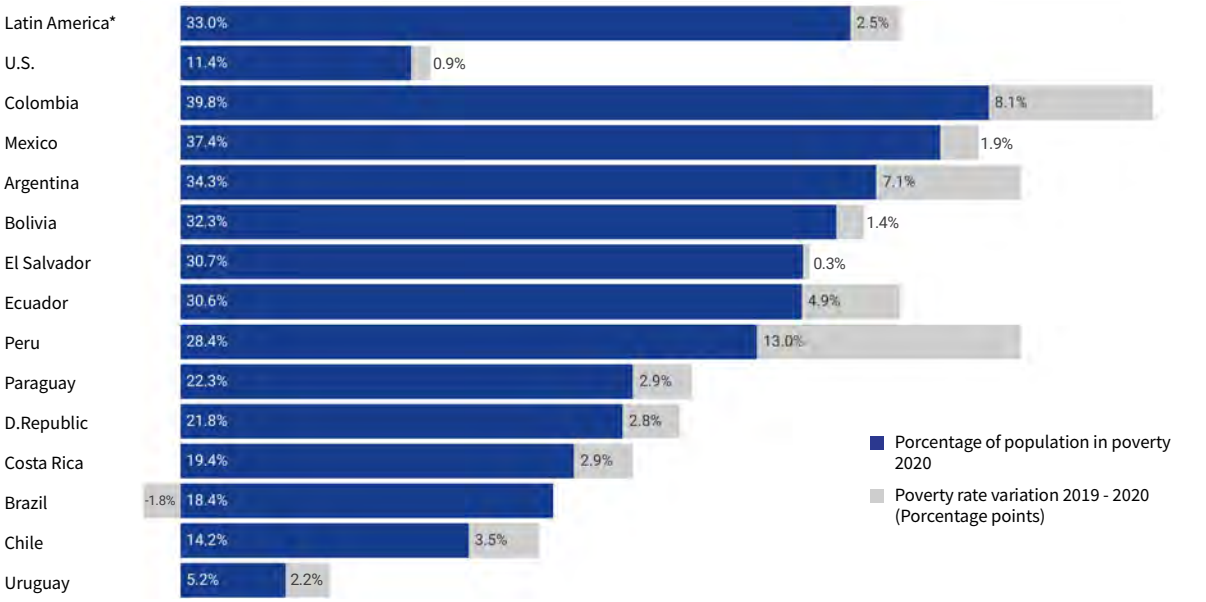
URGENT ISSUES

INEQUALITIES AND POVERTY: THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

SOCIAL INEQUALITY INDEXES in the region and in the United States are among the highest in the world. Many countries and subregions of the hemisphere are on the verge of focused humanitarian crises generated by extreme poverty, economic and social inequality, food shortages, low productivity, labor informality, precarious job markets, and the impacts of climate change.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, income poverty affects approximately 207 million people, or 32.4 percent of the region's population. Of these, 87 million—13.8 percent of the population—suffer extreme poverty.[6] Today, 47 million people are living in a situation of food insecurity, representing 7.4 percent of the population.[7]

Porcentage of population in poverty 2020



Surces: Economic Comission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and U.S. Census Bureau.

* Weighted Average: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, D. Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

** Variation between 2017 and 2020.

*** Variation between 2018 and 2020.

6 Data for 2021. *ECLAC, A decade of action for a change of era. Fifth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean 2022*. https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/presentation/files/220307_ingles_revision_final_sala.pdf

7 Data for 2009. FAO, IFAD, PAHO, WFP, and UNICEF. 2020. Regional Overview of Food and Nutritional Security in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2020. Santiago de Chile. https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CB2242EN

In the 33 Latin American and Caribbean nations, 450 million people live in 15,000 municipalities, a number that reflects territorial diversity and structural inequality, making it difficult to articulate and implement programs that promote change.[8]

Savings levels are among the lowest in the world, with a regional average of 18 percent of GDP in 2020, lower than the 26 percent world average and considerably behind countries such as China, where the average reaches 45 percent. Just over 2 percent of GDP is invested in infrastructure, compared to Asia that averages between 7 and 8 percent.[9] Informal economies cause extreme fragility for the region; poor quality basic services make people vulnerable; and the population has little trust in institutions. For vast sectors of the population, life is reduced to mere survival, while the gap between the richest and the poorest widens each day.

In the Americas, the most critical point to highlight is that unequal distribution of results and the inequality of opportunities among groups or individuals is not exclusive to Latin American and Caribbean countries, with their lower development levels compared to the United States and Canada. The gaps in income, wealth, labor, education, territory, race, digital access, and gender are persistent and greater in this region than in other similar areas and economies, both in the developed North and in the developing South.

Income inequality

Share of national income held by the richiest 10%, between 2000 and 2020*

Source: World Inequality Lab data base.

*Before taxes.

8 Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES).

9 Data from the Infralatam database. In: Brinchetti, Juan Pablo, et. al., *The infrastructure gap in Latin America and the Caribbean*, IDB, 2021. https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/The-Infrastructure-Gap-in-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean-Investment-Needed-Through-2030-to-Meet-the-Sustainable-Development-Goals.pdf.

Asymmetries among American nations remain a constant hallmark of the region. The per capita income gap between Latin America and the Caribbean on the one hand, and the United States on the other, has not decreased since the 1990s, in contrast to the 46-point reduction achieved by countries in the Asian Pacific region.

The pandemic has hit women and households living in poverty particularly hard, widening and perpetuating gender gaps. Figures for Latin America and the Caribbean show an 18-year regression in women's rate of participation in the workforce, which has dropped from 51.8 percent to 47.7 percent, in addition to the lower quality and remuneration of women's employment. Moreover, women carry a growing, disproportionate burden of unpaid care and worsening domestic violence resulting from lockdowns.

Organizations and mechanisms in the Americas have decades of experience in promoting the region's economic and social development: the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the CAF-Development Bank of Latin America may all help to launch and coordinate more specific and effective cooperation for development. Various public and private institutions are currently developing successful models to tackle poverty and inequality; such initiatives may help governments and other social and economic stakeholders design and implement national programs as part of coordinated efforts sponsored by regional bodies.

Humanitarian aid programs addressing the most pressing needs warrant special attention before it is too late. If governments gathered at the Los Angeles Summit were to focus on a single issue, inequalities and poverty would be the priority.

HEALTH CRISIS: FUTURE SURVIVAL

DESPITE SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS and advances in health systems since the misnamed Spanish Flu of 1918 and 1919, a new virus emerged one hundred years later, exposing humanity's vulnerability to such a threat and causing casualties on a vast scale. The Covid-19 pandemic is responsible for 2.7 million deaths in the Americas, a region that constitutes only 13.1 percent of the world's population yet (as of May 2022) has accounted for 43.6 percent of Covid deaths; 8.3 percent of the world's population live in Latin America and the Caribbean, while contributing almost 30 percent of the total Covid deaths.[10] The total number of Covid deaths in the Americas as a whole is therefore higher than any other region on the planet. Combined with the economic and social costs of mandatory lockdowns, the magnitude of the harm is exponential.

The health crisis has revealed contrasting health governance models that have different capabilities to meet the populations' needs. In the absence of a proven model with which to tackle this new threat, it has been a trial-and-error process during which the production of vaccines became the top priority.

American level, and, to a lesser extent, in subregional spaces such as the Caribbean.[11] Inter-American cooperation remains in its infancy and has proved inadequate. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has failed to agree on joint policies and initiatives. The threat remains and its aftereffects will continue to be felt for years to come.

Strengthening preventive healthcare systems and cooperation mechanisms that improve responses to unforeseen events are becoming priorities for the continent's future. One of the most significant consequences of the health crisis was that the Americas' chronically fragile health and social security systems not only proved incapable of controlling the pandemic, but also caused serious delays in the provision of general and specialized health services. Closing the health gap requires accelerating universal access to digital technology in order to expand the coverage of health services.

10 Cumulative death toll as of May 2022. World Health Organization. https://covid19.who.int/

11 The bilateral agreements between Argentina and Mexico on the production and distribution of vaccines in association with private companies stand out as an example of this lack of region-wide collaboration.

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COOPERATION: ALIGNING PROGRAMS WITH SOCIAL AND CITIZEN NEEDS

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT in every form—bilateral, multilateral, North-South, South-South, and triangular—is a key instrument for dealing with the complex and urgent social agenda of the Americas. The challenges of achieving a sustained global economic and social recovery after Covid-19 are tremendous and collective. The pandemic brought a decade of progress in tackling poverty and extreme poverty to a sudden halt; it exacerbated multiple preexisting socioeconomic inequalities, and created new digital and healthcare gaps, and food crises.

Furthermore, these worsening social conditions are happening at a time of sluggish growth, fiscal restrictions, debt, inflation, and a fall in public, private, and foreign investment in the region. Weaker growth and fewer resources are available to create jobs and supply public services. Diverse development models and styles perpetuate low productivity, over-exploitation of resources, external economic vulnerability, technological lags, the concentration of productive capacities in few companies, and territorial inequalities.

Unlike other developing regions also hit by the pandemic, most Latin American and Caribbean countries neither qualify nor have enough access to international cooperation development funds, since many of these nations are lower-middle and upper-middle income economies. The largest share of bilateral and multilateral development aid goes to the poorest countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, or to conflict zones facing serious humanitarian problems. As much as the region's income per capita has increased, Official Development Aid (ODA) has decreased as a percentage of GDP, from 0.5 percent in 1990 to 0.2 percent in 2019.[12]

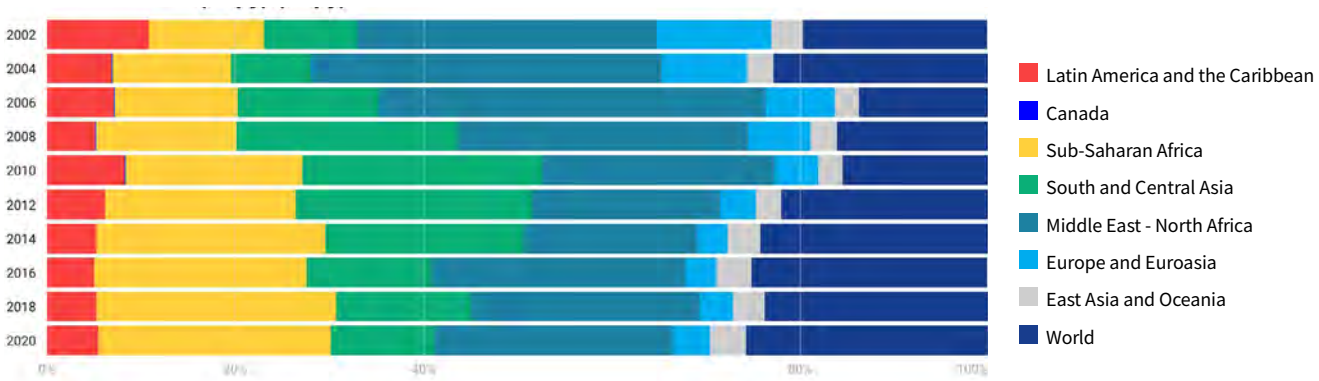
That same trend can be observed in US foreign-aid programs. No Latin American or Caribbean countries feature among the top ten recipients of US aid. Moreover, the resources that do reach the region are concentrated in a handful of countries (Colombia, Mexico, the so-called Northern Triangle countries of Central America, Haiti, and Venezuela). This aid tends to be provided for geopolitical reasons.

A move toward a more coordinated agenda in the Americas with new and flexible structures in which the United States participates in a triangular fashion is necessary. US and Canadian agencies could provide experiences and networks to articulate alliances for development involving multiple stakeholders.

Poor organization and a lack of synergies hamper the work of cooperation agencies and actors. Latin America's large and medium-sized economies (such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Chile) have heterogeneous funds and cooperation agencies; in other countries, institutional structures are weak and unstable due to political and electoral fluctuations—a problem compounded by the common difficulty of partnering with the private sector. Stronger links to small, medium, and large-sized businesses are needed to support cooperation in the region.

12 Presentation by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, at the Tenth Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, March 18, 2021. https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/presentation/files/versoin_final_ppt_cooperacion_sur_sur.pdf

U.S. Oficial development assistance
(% of total disbursed in current US$)



Source: ForeingAssintance.gov

Nevertheless, the region of the Americas has a dense cluster of international cooperation institutions, organizations, and mechanisms for development. Certain sectors and technical areas of cooperation—such as environmental and healthcare—are generally stronger than others that have more heterogeneous and variable outcomes. Some progress has been made in systemizing experiences and cooperation practices.

Within the specific framework of the Summit, the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG)— created in 2001 and composed of 13 multilateral institutions (international, Inter-American, Latin American, sub- and extra-regional)—[13] provides technical guidance to the different countries and helps design and implement the agreed mandates. In this way, cooperation across the continent has a notable track record and historical presence on a global scale. Yet there continue to be overlaps and a lack of competence and coordination among cooperation aid providers and recipients.

A need exists for a specific, rigorous, and independent analysis—with the participation of academic experts, international officials, and members of specialized civil society organizations—that considers the progress and fulfillment of the Summits' negotiated agreements in order to make a balanced assessment of lessons learned. Today, information is scattered and fragmented, preventing sound proposals to improve institutional practices and processes in the field of international cooperation for development in the Americas.

The main challenge is that citizen interests are not properly aligned with government programs, and therefore they will also fail to harmonize with international cooperation programs. The vast territorial diversity of Latin America and the Caribbean means that pre-prepared solutions are not always efficient. Interventions must be coordinated with central-subnational governments and other cooperation agencies.

13 OAS, IDB, ECLAC, PAHO, World Bank, CAF, IICA, CABEI, BCI, IOM, ILO, UNDP, and OECD.

STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND ENERGY TRANSITION: THE FUTURE AGENDA

THE CHRONIC INEQUALITIES in the Americas cannot be redressed without an economic recovery based on a new development model that is socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable, with a low carbon footprint, and resilient to international volatility. Although working toward energy transition and environmental protection represents a convergent and promising agenda at a hemispheric level, it is such a complex, costly, and asymmetrical process—with winners and losers along the way—that it requires a vast capacity for negotiating among the various stakeholders in public and private institutions and among members of civil society, as well as long-term strategies. This transition requires social and scientific leadership organized into epistemic communities and communities of practice.

Certain strategic areas require medium- and long-term cooperation plans and programs, as in the case of energy resource management. All inhabitants of the Americas will benefit from an approach that encompasses energy production, distribution, and use. This also applies to climate change programs, a shared challenge that calls for structural and long-term solutions. Managing energy transition is a major step and requires a focus on development gaps among countries, modifying productive matrices, and reorienting development models. All of this implies varying speeds and bespoke solutions depending on diverse national, local, cross-border, and transregional contexts.

It is essential to develop agreement capabilities among Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, and Canada as a contribution to environmental global governance, in addition to a proposed intergovernmental agenda—agreed upon by social movements and organizations and international organizations—on the Americas' most urgent environmental matters.

All Western Hemisphere countries, including Cuba, agree on the need for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) and other pollutants such as carbon particles. Adaptation measures are also essential for societies and natural habitats to become more resilient to the risks of global warming. China is currently the primary global emitter of GHG, followed by the United States and the European Union as a block; Brazil ranks seventh and Mexico fourteenth, followed closely by Canada.

The United States' new industrial policy is oriented toward a progressive decarbonization of its economy; the hope is that by 2035, electricity production will be free of carbon emissions and that the rest of the economy will reach carbon neutrality by 2050. While the health and economic crises are certainly a temptation to recarbonize the economy to recover growth, the green transition is urgent for human and environmental sustainability, in line with the Paris Agreement and with the goal of transitioning towards green industries and jobs.

The 2022 Summit of the Americas will have to find a way to connect the new growth agenda that rearticulates global supply chains and the creation of green jobs throughout the current decade, in order to increase the resilience of the region's countries and communities to the dual impact of the health crisis and geopolitical realignments.

On energy transition and environmental strengthening, a continent-wide dialogue that addresses schedules, roadmaps, and modalities of decarbonization processes is key. Such a discussion needs to consider the differentiated rhythms required by Latin American and Caribbean countries. Trying to force options such as complete decarbonization, that lack the necessary regional development measures, could lead to tensions and delay launches.

Doubling down on efforts to broaden and deepen strategies to adapt to climate change, which reduces vulnerabilities and increases the resilience of ecosystems, productive systems, and communities, is an even

more pressing issue. Similarly, it is essential to bolster cooperation on early-warning and immediate-response systems and reconstruction efforts following natural disasters.

The Summit's agreements must foster scientific and technological cooperation among universities, research centers, public- and private-sector companies, and also identify potential sources of funding for border projects such as green hydrogen and tidal energy. Promoting a new observatory that measures and follows up on climate change risks and vulnerabilities facing the Western Hemisphere is similarly advisable, with the aim of generating a continent-wide risk map that identifies areas of high vulnerability and cooperation to reduce and mitigate the costs deriving from said risks.

NEW APPROACHES TO PRIORITIES

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: CITIZEN PREFERENCES AND DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

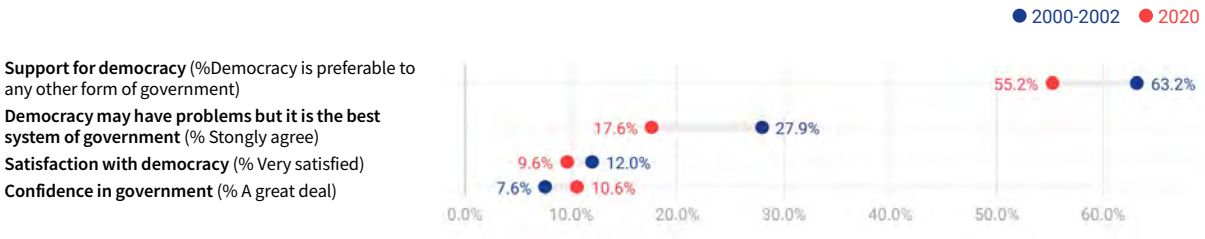
DEMOCRACY IN THE 21 ST CENTURY cannot be understood as an issue of international alignment using 20th century reference points. Discussions about democracy requires us to reevaluate its contents to meet expectations of improving governance, ensuring political stability, tackling poverty, and reducing social inequality in most countries of the Americas.

The region's nations are pro-democracy, but in several cases, human, political, and social rights are not fully respected by governments. Such failures have widened the gap between governments and the public, reducing incentives for joint efforts.

The erosion of the political party system and poor-quality government within the presidential system established in most democracies in the Americas has transformed electoral processes into plebiscite drills, exacerbating political polarization and undermining the effectivity and sustainability of public policies. The lack of continuity reduces the possibility for the inclusive and diverse innovations needed to meet the latest challenges presented by a wide range of new areas of human rights.

A perceptible disconnect is growing between societies and their representatives, and confidence in institutionality is falling in most countries of the continent—including the United States and Canada. Channels designed to deal with new social demands are insufficient and inadequate, and elites frequently point towards polarizing, unsustainable, and non-consensual solutions.

Perceptions of democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean
(2000-2002 to 2020)



Source: Latinbarómetro

Human rights, gender inclusion, and respect for minorities have all gained importance in different countries and sectors across the North and South of the Americas, where a growing number of civil society organizations are becoming more versatile and influential. A democratic deficit exists that requires government and in political institutions to be more attentive and more effective in order to respond to the requirements and agendas of new social actors. The time has come to empower members of civil society. States no longer have an exclusive say in generating change.

Given the multiple institutional challenges facing Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, and Canada, greater unity could come from encouraging specific democratic practices, rather than simply specifying a country as being democratic or not, or classifying their level of democracy.

How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?
(% Absolutely important)

Source: World Values Survey database

The time has come to promote and validate new forms of participation and transparency at the various levels and in the different areas of public administration. The development of best democratic practices —participative, inclusive, integrative, transparent and deliberative— must be promoted in all nations of the Americas. The focus must be on improving government regimes, containing possible threats to democracy, and facilitating a move towards full, inclusive, quality democracies, with strong institutions and full respect for human rights.

The promotion and development of democratic practices will deal with different types of processes and situations, such as those concerned with a deepening of democracy and the rule of law, deteriorating legitimacy of democratic institutions, or democratic transitions. The key is that these practices be committed to a sense of inclusivity, transparency, respect for human rights, institutionality, and predictability.

Best democratic practices must become the norm in all contexts—at a national, local, and community level—where there is interest in building and strengthening, in everyday life, social pacts aligning the specific aspects of each country's democratic culture, taking into account local history, ethnic diversity, geopolitical location, and regional context.

It is worrying how, in many countries, including the United States, civil unrest along with the pandemic has led to restrictions of civil liberties as well as the occasional or regular intervention of armed forces in civil society contexts as well as in public security roles.

SECURITY AND DEFENSE: VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC SECURITY

INTERSTATE ARMED CONFLICTS within the Americas continue to be fewer in number than in other regions in the world. However, high levels of insecurity and many forms of violence worsen the population's living conditions, presenting a serious problem shared by all.

The Americas has the highest homicide rate in the world—17.2 percent—and concentrates 37.4 percent of homicide victims worldwide;[14] Latin American and Caribbean nations account for 8.4 percent of the world's population but register 33 percent of global homicides, and 14 out of the 20 most violent countries in the world are in the region.[15] This reality also affects the United States, with 4 out of the 20 most violent cities in the world. The number of victims of public insecurity and organized crime in the region is one of the highest globally. In 2021, 1 out of 5 murder victims worldwide was a Venezuelan, Colombian, or Brazilian national. The index of femicides, the murder of journalists, family violence, and other criminal offenses are also among the highest in the world.

What are the defense and security priorities in the Americas? For the United States, the security agenda is essentially a domestic and international security matter. For Latin American and Caribbean countries, the public insecurity crisis is at the heart of the security agenda. This situation has prompted most of the region's nations to deploy armed forces into public security roles, generally without proper planning. This has led to distortions, duplications, and frequent human rights violations. A tendency also exists to securitize certain issues, such as migration, and militarize civil protection (natural disasters) and environmental protection measures.

A narrative of fear has abetted the militarization of public security. Nonetheless, this militarization has failed to deliver substantial improvements to public security. Meanwhile, the supply and availability of legal and illegal weapons in the region has not diminished, contributing to an increase in violence; 66 percent of homicides in the region are crimes committed with a firearm. In parallel, the Americas prison overpopulation continues to grow, and it has the highest rate of imprisonment in the world (379 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants).[16] The problem is worst in North America and Brazil, the country with the third-largest population of prisoners. The availability of firearms and the over-imprisonment are priorities as cross-cutting issues of shared interest in the Americas.

Drug trafficking remains at the center of public security concerns. A transnational phenomenon, this illegal trade involves all countries of the Americas, leading to overpopulated prisons in Latin America that have become de facto headquarters for organized criminal groups. Similarly, the public health costs continue rising, especially in the United States where overdoses have caused deaths on the scale of an epidemic, with more than 107,000 fatalities in 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the drug-consumption problem in many countries. The situation calls for a new approach to the failed war on drugs, with a focus on reducing the damage caused and moving toward systems of selective, modulated, and varied regulation that goes beyond the prohibitionist paradigm at the continental level.

14 UNODC, Global Study on Homicide 2019, (Vienna, 2019). https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/global-study-on-homicide.html

15 Igarapé Institute, *Observatório de homicídios*, Brazil, 2022. https://igarape.org.br/apps/observatorio-de-homicidios/

16 Data from 2019 (unodc). https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/DataMatters1_prison.pdf

Public security is closely linked to justice systems. Cooperation that seeks to strengthen entities entrusted with prosecutions, rule of law, the fight against impunity, violence, and crime prevention, must be a core component of Inter-American cooperation.

The United States' distancing from Latin America and the Caribbean's problems is also reflected in security and defense issues. Even intelligence cooperation on transnational crime has decreased in recent years. Security issues must be handled in line with common principles that value information transparency, respect for human rights, and the democratic framework necessary for civil-military coexistence. Accordingly, when defining the political parameters and priorities of relations between the United States and Latin American/Caribbean nations, it is important to question the role of US security and defense agencies, especially the USSOUTHCOM and USNORTHCOM.

The US vision and policies for the South have contributed to a simplified and securitized perception of our region's multiple realities, hindering the development of integral civil security approaches, the regulation of police forces, social prevention of violence, damage and incarceration reduction, and social reintegration. Additionally, a predominant security perspective —be it military or police— diminishes the possibility of political dialogue.

The region's specialized government agencies must be responsible for fixing and monitoring collaborative actions among military, intelligence and police sectors in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean, focusing on issues such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, transnational financial crimes, weapon trafficking, and wildlife trafficking.

In addition to the United Nations' human security vision, we must incorporate programs and measures to prevent violence and crime; apart from remedial measures, and more importantly, we need to work on prevention. This is only possible through a far-reaching vision and long-term programs.

MIGRATION: AN ONGOING PROBLEM

MIGRATION IS AN ANCESTRAL PHENOMENON, inherent to interactions among peoples and usually beneficial for migrants and recipients of migration flows. According to the WHO, in 2020, 281 million people were living in a location other than their place of origin. According to this report, as many as 73.5 million migrants live in the Americas, representing 26 percent of the world's total, distributed in North America (21 percent of the world's total) and in Latin America (5 percent of the world's total).[17]

Migration remains a hot topic throughout the Americas, given the increase—for different reasons—in forced migration. This reality will not change. It is a historical and structural phenomenon reinforced by family networks, demographic complementarities, and economic and job opportunities. And yet today, the negative factors that propel forced migration of refugees and displaced peoples have increased as a result of social precariousness, security, and environmental factors.

In 2020, 17.6 million migrants and 10.8 million immigrants were registered in South America, revealing a permanent mobilization of the population across the southern part of the continent. The countries with the highest number of immigrants are Argentina and Colombia. As of July 2021, 4.1 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants were registered: 1.7 million (43 percent) in Colombia, followed by Peru with 830,000, and Chile with 455,500.[18] The United States is the chosen destination for 68 percent of migrants from South America. Mexico occupies second place, with 14 percent of migrants, and Canada third place, with 7 percent of migrants.

The United States absorbs the greatest number of immigrants in the North American region. Mexico is the primary country of origin (c. 11 million), followed by Venezuela (5.4 million). In proportion to their population size, notable flows of migrants to the United States come from Cuba (1.8 million), El Salvador (1.6 million), Dominican Republic (1.6 million), Guatemala (1.4 million), Honduras (865,000), and Nicaragua (718,000).[19]

Migration will continue to be an ongoing issue in the Americas, and what will make a difference is how government agendas address it. Migration governance in countries of the Americas is generally precarious, which implies growing costs both for migrants and for host countries. No consensus exists in the Americas on the way forward for migration governance or on possible mediation forums on this issue.

Improving migration governance is urgent in all regional and subregional spaces of the Americas. There is experience and best practices in many countries of the region that can be harnessed in streamlining admission, regularization, and integration processes, as well as in the establishment of temporary worker programs and in the improvement of humanitarian conditions for migrant populations, especially those who are part of forced migrations.

The Regional Conference on Migration and other subregional entities should work toward bringing about documented, safe, and regulated migration. In contrast to other areas where cooperation involves relatively few stakeholders—for example, economic actors in trade, or state agencies in security—migration is an economic and social phenomenon with multiple effects across the political, economic, and social spectrum.

17 International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2020*, IOM, Geneva. https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2020

18 "Current Trends: Intraregional Migration", Migration data in South America, IOM, 2021, from https://www. migrationdataportal.org/regional-data-overview/migration-data-south-america

19 Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub 2022.

Migration is a highly sensitive issue that affects migrants' physical and emotional integrity and their extreme vulnerability—especially in the case of those who are undocumented. This makes them easy prey for organized crime and victims of continued human rights violations. Family separation, which compounds the vulnerabilities suffered by migrant populations, also needs to be studied and addressed.

Improving migration governance is an ongoing challenge for the Americas. However, unlike many other issues, progress is within our reach, and requires properly joined-up initiatives towards making real change in migration policy, beyond containment and control. Such a measure should be comprehensive and cross-cutting; apply a gender perspective; encompass all phases and particularities of the migration cycle; prioritize migrant and refugee rights; open legal pathways to temporary and permanent regularization; identify ways to empower migrants; contain and respond to humanitarian crises; and focus on the economic and social benefits of a regular, safe, and ordered migration.

The first challenge of a new migration dialogue in the Americas is questioning the dominant narrative that "migration is a problem or the cause of crisis," when actually it is a "constant and challening reality both for source and host societies, yet it exists because it brings the promise of opportunity."[20]

20 Claudia Masferrer and Lucy Pedroza (eds). *La intersección de la política exterior y la política migratoria en el México de hoy*. El Colegio de México. 2021. https://migdep.colmex.mx/publicaciones/politica-exterior-migratoria-reporte.pdf

IMPROVING INTER-INSTITUTIONAL DIALOGUE AND STRENGTHENING COOPERATION

COOPERATION MECHANISMS

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE HEALTH CRISIS and the consequent economic crisis reveals the region's low joint-response capacity. Cooperation efforts are in their infancy and usually operate on a subregional basis. Areas of cooperation are predominantly bilateral initiatives between the United States and Canada with other countries in the region; no Inter-American cooperation structures exist to provide significant solutions to shared problems.

Additionally, the global economic crisis has led to gradual budget cuts for development cooperation and humanitarian aid. This trend reduces available resources and options, increases competition and, in some cases, discourages cooperation between potential recipients.

The positive effects of international cooperation are diminished due to discrepancies between national policies and social needs: cooperation initiatives are not properly aligned with national programs; government policies are non-continuous; and, in some cases, recipient governments are ineffective and corrupt.

STAKEHOLDERS

NEW SCENARIOS require us to consider the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations in generating democratic practices that provide legitimacy, efficacy, and sustainability to actions taken through cooperation programs. We need to promote the training of networks of experts, scientists, academics, activists, technically qualified personnel, and members of civil society grouped together in areas of expertise in epistemic communities, and communities of practice.

Consultation and cooperation structures must consider the variations between countries in the region in terms of their specific needs and capabilities. We cannot overstate the relevance of the States' loss of control over many stakeholders' decisions and conduct—especially in economic and social areas. This situation forces direct inclusion and participation of said stakeholders in cooperation initiatives; therefore, dialogue and interaction among the regions' parliamentarians could offer invaluable support for specific actions and programs.

The success of the actions taken will depend first on political dialogue, followed by the technical capabilities in program design and implementation. Strengthening institutional frameworks means reinforcing, using, and improving existing bodies designed for this purpose in their design, execution, and monitoring capabilities. Without solid technical support or the necessary operational capabilities, it will be unlikely for objectives stated in political announcements to be met.

As part of these efforts, it is important to consider synergies with extra-regional cooperation bodies and to find alignments with initiatives emerging from the Americas. Such is the case of the European Union, the Ibero-American General Secretariat, and other similar entities.

A ROADMAP FOR A NEW AGENDA

1. **The social agenda should be the focus and the compass** to guide and gives strategic meaning to dialogue and collective action in the Americas. It is time to focus on policies agreed at an inter-governmental level and among societies to reduce the deep-rooted socioeconomic inequalities, eradicate poverty, extend rights for everyone, and provide universal access to basic services.
2. The **gender perspective is strategic** for the redesign and implementation of effective social policies. It is an essential condition to close gaps. Given the economic recession, health crisis, and domestic violence that is increasingly affecting women, it is necessary to increase their participation and to have their voices heard at the heart of decision-making bodies, and to support the care economy.
3. A robust, consensual, and an **impartial inter-American cooperation model** in line with the 2030 Agenda **still does not exist** for equality, inclusion, and humanitarian care. It needs to be developed and funded. Development banks and the region's institutions working on development issues have made technical progress but their funding is insufficient and inflexible.
4. It is urgent **to strengthen capacities and coordination to respond to humanitarian,** food, health, and environmental emergencies, exacerbated by the pandemic and the economic recession. The main lesson learned from the health crisis is that the policies of "everyone for themselves" increased risks and costs for everyone, particularly the most vulnerable sectors of society.
5. Making progress on the social agenda requires new, comprehensive approaches of inclusive, cross-cutting public policies and a strong inter-American institutionality that does not yet exist. The **political commitment to development** should not be conditional on geopolitical calculations or ideological alignments, and no one should be left out. To be credible, budgetary resources must be available.
6. This is the moment to recapitalize the Inter-American Development Bank and to return to the foundational agreement for its leadership should be Latin American or Caribbean to achieve a **better balance between donor and recipient countries.** Cooperation programs must be multilateral and better funded. Above all, there needs to be better coordination between the IADB, CAF, ECLAC, and the full range of subregional and extra-regional mechanisms.
7. Through political dialogue, it is necessary to move toward **designing specific, technically robust actions**. Politics must be about taking action. It is therefore important to leave behind the ideological and institutional inertia that impedes new outlooks. **New contexts call for different, more agile, and pertinent answers**, with a strategic vision and medium- and long-term horizons.
8. **The inter-American system has become dysfunctional**, politicized, and is in need of urgent repair. This entails the need for a new**, inclusive, balanced, ongoing, and multisectoral inter-American dialogue**, almost as if starting anew, in order to **rethink, update, and reform** the region's institutional architecture where needed and strengthen it where it is working.

9. **Human rights defense mechanisms** must be strengthened through existing institutions. The Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights play a central role to repair the situation and they require unconditional support and resources in order to function. The United States could send a signal of its commitment by ratifying the inter-American instruments on human rights issues.
10. Defending and promoting democracy are central issues for this Summit and part of the regulatory principles of the inter-American system. **Increasing the quality and credibility of democracies** in the region is a major challenge that requires us to go beyond an institutional focus and to recognize that exclusion, isolation, and coercive measures have so far failed to prevent the drift toward authoritarianism.
11. The need exists to improve and expand the forms or political participation and representation by **promoting democratic practices** for the institutions to clearly reflect citizens' new demands and subjectivities and to raise the standard and credibility of the region's democracies. Civil society is mobilized, dynamic, and requires a higher level and quality of participation.
12. Today the political space and greater convergences exists to **revisit the failed security strategies** of the past. We need to accelerate the dismantling of the prohibitionist drug paradigm, make progress on mechanisms for selective and modulated regulation of psychotropic substances, and **institutionalize a focus on harm reduction at an inter-American level**. This calls for more research, better data, and above all better regional coordination.
13. If the aim is truly to reduce violence and the influence of organized crime in the Americas, we need to take immediate steps to regulate and **limit the availability and trafficking of firearms**. Weapons producers and distributors are negligent and co-responsible for the spiraling violence in our countries. Hardline policies of criminalizing social protests and the militarization of public security have proved to be ineffective, counterproductive, and in breach of human rights. We need to reverse this strategy and instead focus on prevention, social reintegration, and prisoner-release programs.
14. **Migration is an ongoing and urgent issue** that combines an increasingly complex and interconnected set of economic, social, and human factors across the continent. The most pressing problem is the precarious and vulnerable situation of migrants in transit. A need exists for new channels for regularization, refugee and asylum applications, and also the investment of more resources to develop the communities of origin.
15. It is essential to **involve subnational governments, local authorities, and community actors** in the construction of the new, shared inter-American agenda, in order to ensure that the actions taken meet the needs of the beneficiary communities. New situations make it necessary to **reassess the role of civil society and epistemic communities** in order to reconnect the cooperation schemes to people's needs, making them legitimate, sustainable, and effective. Networks of experts and activists are essential.

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