



2022 Summit of the Americas

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The United States is hosting the [Ninth Summit of the Americas](#) in Los Angeles from June 6-10, 2022. The Summits of the Americas, held roughly every three years, serve as opportunities for the Western Hemisphere’s heads of government to engage directly with one another and address issues of collective concern. In May 2021, the Senate passed S.Res. 120, calling on the President to “lead a strong and coordinated diplomatic effort” during the summit process to strengthen democratic governance, support post-pandemic economic recovery efforts, enhance security cooperation, and address displacement and migration in the Western Hemisphere. Depending on what, if any, commitments or proposals the President makes at the summit, he could call on Congress to approve policy changes and/or appropriate resources.

Background

The Summits of the Americas were established in the early 1990s during a brief period of broad political consensus in the Western Hemisphere. After decades of civil war and military rule, 34 of the 35 countries in the region had established elected civilian democracies. Likewise, following the end of the Cold War, most of the governments in the region had moved away from state-led development in favor of economic liberalization. To build on those shared values and develop a common agenda for the hemisphere’s future, President Bill Clinton invited the democratically elected heads of government in the hemisphere to attend the first Summit of the Americas in Miami in 1994. The summit attendees approved a comprehensive [plan of action](#) with 23 separate initiatives, the most prominent of which was an agreement to work toward the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Although the FTAA was never realized, the negotiating process intensified regional dialogue on trade, leading to numerous bilateral and regional free trade agreements.

Since the first summit in Miami, there have been seven additional Summits of the Americas and two Special Summits of the Americas. The meetings have resulted in several [notable initiatives](#), including the 2001 [Inter-American Democratic Charter](#)—an agreement among Western Hemisphere countries that the peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and that their governments have an obligation to promote and defend that right. The hemisphere’s leaders have been [unable to reach consensus](#) on many regional challenges at more recent summits, however, leading [some analysts](#) to argue the summits have not been an effective platform for cooperation. [Others contend](#) the summits’ ability to convene heads of government for formal and informal discussions remains valuable.

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Prospects for the Los Angeles Summit

As has occurred in previous years, the lead-up to the Los Angeles summit has been dominated by controversy over which leaders will attend. The hemisphere's leaders [agreed in 2001](#) that only democratic governments would participate in the summit process. The regional consensus has shifted since then, leading to Cuba's participation in the 2015 and 2018 summits. Whereas [some Members of Congress](#) called on the Biden Administration to exclude the authoritarian governments of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, many Latin American and Caribbean leaders insisted that every country in the hemisphere should participate in the summit. After an extended consultation process, the Administration ultimately [decided to exclude](#) those authoritarian governments but invited Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan citizens to participate in three official stakeholder forums for [civil society](#), [youth](#), and [private sector](#) representatives to occur during the summit. [Some leaders](#), including the [president of Mexico](#), reportedly plan to skip the summit in protest or remain home for [other reasons](#), potentially hampering efforts to establish regional consensus on key issues.

Official Agenda

The official theme of the 2022 summit is "Building a Sustainable, Resilient, and Equitable Future." In February 2022, the U.S. government presented five draft political commitments to be considered at the summit related to strengthening [health systems](#), addressing [climate change](#), accelerating the transition to [clean energy](#), establishing a regional program for [digital transformation](#), and bolstering [democratic governance](#). Among the more concrete commitments included in the initial drafts were to

- reach consensus on a regional action plan to address the effects of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and strengthen health systems by the 10th Summit of the Americas;
- develop national plans to achieve net zero deforestation by 2030 and to incorporate those goals into Paris Agreement commitments prior to the 2022 U.N. climate change conference;
- end public financing for new unabated coal power generation by the end of 2022;
- facilitate affordable and universal broadband access by 2030;
- provide standing invitations for Organization of American States electoral observation missions; and
- establish a regional mechanism to evaluate emerging threats to democracy prior to the 10th Summit of the Americas.

Representatives of the hemisphere's governments have been meeting regularly in the lead-up to the summit to refine each of the political commitments. According to [U.S. Summit of the Americas National Coordinator Kevin O'Reilly](#), coalitions of countries may need to forge ahead on certain issues if the region as a whole is unable to achieve consensus.

Other U.S. Policy Initiatives

The Biden Administration has indicated that addressing irregular migration will be among its top priorities at the summit. Although U.S. domestic attention has focused largely on the [situation at the U.S. Southwest Border](#), large-scale migration movements are occurring throughout the Western Hemisphere. For example, more than 6.1 million people have left Venezuela since 2014 and [more than 5 million](#) Venezuelan migrants and refugees are residing throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The Administration [is negotiating](#) a Los Angeles Declaration for Migration and Protection that would

recognize migration management as a shared responsibility and seek to bolster regional efforts to improve border security, combat smuggling, create legal migration pathways, address the root causes of migration, and support migrant host communities.

The Administration also may seek hemispheric support for other initiatives. For example, the Administration intends to present a “[new and ambitious economic agenda](#)” that builds on existing free trade agreements in the hemisphere. According to one [press report](#), the proposal may aim to strengthen economic integration, address supply-chain vulnerabilities, and encourage nearshoring—the relocation of U.S. multinational firms from Asia to the Western Hemisphere.

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