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UNCLASSIFIEDMEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY MINISTER TO THE CABINETUPDATE ON THE SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY (29-30 MARCH 2023)

(Information Only)

**SUMMARY**

- The United States (U.S.) will host the second Summit for Democracy on March 29-30, 2023, in collaboration with four regional co-host countries: the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Zambia and Costa Rica.
- Day 1 (March 29) will assemble Heads of State and Government, followed by Leaders' endorsement of a Declaration (**TAB A**). It is anticipated that the Prime Minister will be invited to this virtual event. On Day 2 (March 30), Foreign Ministers will be invited to participate in hybrid sessions taking place in the five co-host countries.
- This Summit will be an opportunity to highlight Canada's achievements on the substantive list of domestic and international commitments presented in December 2021, including on the Minister's mandate to implement and advance the Plan to Protect Canada's Democracy.
- At present, there do not appear to be opportunities for Minister LeBlanc to participate in Day 2 activities, although PCO-DI is working with Global Affairs Canada to highlight work done to advance the Minister's mandate. This includes, for example, the presentation of the work of the Information Integrity cohort, a working-level group of countries, civil society organizations, and others during the March 30 Washington event (**TAB B**). In addition, a side-event on information integrity currently under consideration may provide an opportunity to profile the work of the Canadian Digital Media Research Network. The Network could also be mentioned in the Prime Minister's remarks on Day 1.
- **Next steps:** PCO-DI will continue to work closely with Global Affairs Canada and PCO-Foreign & Defence Policy and return to you with updates on Summit planning, and opportunities to highlight work to advance Minister LeBlanc's mandate, as they become available.

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- [APG] - UNCLASSIFIED**Background**

- On December 9-10, 2021, President Biden hosted the first Summit for Democracy, a virtual event that brought together leaders from government, civil society, and the private sector around three themes: defending against authoritarianism, addressing and fighting corruption, and promoting respect for human rights
- To demonstrate concrete steps, the Summit kicked off a Year of Action to make democracies more responsive and resilient, and to build a broader community of partners committed to global democratic renewal. Canada made 35 domestic and international commitments to address democracy, authoritarianism, corruption, and human rights.

*Second Summit for Democracy*

- The United States (U.S.) will host the second Summit for Democracy on March 29-30, 2023, in collaboration with four regional co-host countries: the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Zambia and Costa Rica.
- With over 100 Heads of State and Government expected to participate virtually, the U.S. views this Summit as an opportunity to build on momentum from the 2021 Summit, while demonstrating how democracies deliver for their citizens and are best equipped to address the world's most pressing challenges. The Summit is an important foreign and domestic policy deliverable for President Biden, and the Prime Minister's participation will underscore the mutual importance placed by Canada and the U.S. on democratic governance.
- This Summit is still in the planning stages, but Day 1 (March 29) will assemble Heads of States and Governments, followed by Leaders' endorsement of a Declaration. On Day 2 (March 30), Foreign Ministers will be invited to participate in hybrid sessions taking place in different locations across the globe (Washington D.C., the Netherlands, Costa Rica, Zambia and the Republic of Korea).
- Should he attend, the Prime Minister's participation at the Summit will be fully virtual and include: a live intervention during a Leader-level, 1 hour session on March 29 (official invitation is expected); and a 3-4 minute pre-recorded video intervention. Videos are intended to focus on how countries have implemented their commitments since the first Summit in December 2021.

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- [APG] - UNCLASSIFIED*Canada's involvement*

- In preparation for the second Summit, Canada (through Global Affairs Canada) co-leads two of the 16 cohort working groups: Media Freedom (with the Netherlands and civil society partner Internews) and Information Integrity (with Latvia and civil society partner Alliance for Securing Democracy) (**TAB B**), and also participates in the Civic Space cohort. Cohort working groups prepare various products and deliverables, including outcomes that could be highlighted at the Summit. It is intended that the cohorts will continue their work after the second (and likely final) Summit.
  - The Media Freedom cohort has three workstreams: (1) Protecting journalists' safety and security; (2) Advancing freedom of expression; and (3) Bolstering independent and diverse media.
  - The Information Integrity cohort is undertaking an initial mapping of organizations, initiatives, and existing resources related to information integrity, as well as identifying next steps required to uphold information integrity.
- Canada also actively participates in the "Summit Focal Group," a group of approximately 70 countries led by the U.S. who are negotiating language for the draft Declaration (**TAB A**). The Prime Minister's Office, via PCO Foreign & Defence Policy (F&DP), has been consulted on several draft versions of the Declaration, as has PCO-DI.
- This Summit will be an opportunity to highlight Canada's achievements on the substantive list of domestic and international commitments presented in December 2021; actively engage on Canada's thematic priorities, including through the work of cohorts; and present deliverables.
- As of January 2023, Canada has completed 12 of its 35 commitments, including "to implement and to refine the Plan to Protect Canada's Democracy". This commitment has been fulfilled by:
  - Securing funding to advance key elements: addition of a new protecting democracy unit within PCO and a new partnership with civil society (the Canadian Digital Media Research Network); expansion of the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism; and additional funding to continue the activities of the Digital Citizen Initiative, including efforts to counter online disinformation and other online harms and threats;
  - Ongoing engagement across government on next steps; and

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- Completing the independent assessment of the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol (public version to be released).
- An additional six of Canada's 35 commitments are progressing well, with targeted completion dates in sight. Significant progress has also been achieved for the remaining 17 commitments.

### Considerations

- Current thinking for Day 2 is that Minister Joly will be invited to attend the event in Washington, which will include the presentation of work from the Information Integrity cohort. It is also anticipated that Costa Rica will invite Minister Joly to attend an Americas regional event focused on youth political participation.
- In this case, GAC would likely recommend Minister Joly attend the Washington event, and also propose organizing a side-event on information integrity there. In addition to the work of the Information Integrity cohort that GAC is co-leading, and GAC's own work in this space (e.g. G7 RRM, Freedom Online Coalition), the side event could be an opportunity to highlight work under Minister LeBlanc's mandate on Protecting Democracy (e.g. countering mis/disinformation).
- In particular, the side event could be an opportunity to profile the work, and potentially announce the establishment, of the Canadian Digital Media Research Network. The Network could also be mentioned in the Prime Minister's remarks reporting on Canada's commitments, along with the main items expected to be announced – s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

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### PCO Comment

- While many of the Summit details are still to be determined, PCO-DI continues to explore potential opportunities to highlight work to advance Minister LeBlanc's mandate.
- More broadly, PCO-DI continues to engage with Global Affairs Canada and PCO-F&DP to ensure the domestic perspective is included in Canada's Summit preparations and communications (e.g. negotiations on the draft Declaration), notably as it concerns the Minister's mandate commitment on Protecting Democracy (e.g. foreign interference, dis/misinformation).

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- PCO-DI will return with updates on Summit planning as they become available.

Allen Sutherland

Attachments: 2

Stinson