

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Allow me first of all to tell you how pleased and honored I am to be representing Mexico for the first time in the International Dialogue on Migration. I would like to thank the International Organization for Migration for organizing the Diaspora Ministerial Conference, the first high-level conference focused on diaspora. This is a great opportunity for me to share, on behalf of my government, the Mexican experience and best practices on this important matter.

We have gathered today to recognize new realities and to explore the potential of diaspora involvement in development, as well as to define possible policies and programs that could be designed to maximize their potential.

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Mexico, as a country of origin, transit, destination and return of migrants, is defined by migration. There are more than 12 million first generation Mexicans abroad, and –including second and third generations–, almost 34 million people of Mexican ascendance living only in the United States. With a diaspora of this size and characteristics, the potential for growth and development is enormous.

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For Mexico, remittances are an important source of income and stability. With more than 23 billion dollars, we hold the 4th place in the world as migrant remittances receiver (after India, China and Philippines) and the 1st place in Latin America. However, these remittances account for only 20% of what Mexicans abroad are sending back home, and their use is mainly for consumption. Worldwide, governments have tried to use remittances for "productive" purposes, but in most cases these efforts proved to be vain. Consequently, we have recognized that by focusing on remittances instead of people, we lack of important components: capacity building and engagement. Therefore, our new approach is to help our

diaspora become successful abroad, and only then, invite them to invest in comprehensive projects.

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The Institute for Mexicans Abroad was created in 2003 as a strategy to connect with its diaspora and empower the Mexican communities abroad. Our guiding mission is to improve the lives of our people. Hence, we work, in coordination with other government bodies, NGOs and academia, in key areas that aim to increase the living standards of Mexicans abroad and their families, such as access to education, health, culture, sports, financial education, as well as economic development and community organization.

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Among our programs, *Health Windows* at our 50 consulates in the United States have been recognized as an international good practice. In 2012, more than a million people benefited from preventive health services offered by qualified personnel. Regarding education, *IME-Scholarships* are an example of Mexican government commitment to improve the education standards of its population abroad: through *Plazas Comunitarias*, or *Community Halls*, more than 40 thousand people have benefited from literacy lessons and attended primary, middle and high school, as well as had the opportunity to enroll in higher education programs. There are also programs that enable our diaspora to invest and engage with their communities of origin: in 2012, *3X1 Program for Migrants* implemented 18,500 productive projects in more than 1,000 municipalities, with the participation of more than 1,000 clubs and migrant organizations. For instance, from 2010 to 2013, *Paisano Invest in Your Land* program coordinated 88 projects across the country, creating more than a 1,000 permanent and 10,000 temporary jobs.

The list of programs continues. However, at the Institute for Mexicans Abroad, we have also focused on the importance of networking and building strategic partnerships and alliances for effective community organization. We recognize that developing an organized Mexican emigrant community increases the visibility of

Mexican immigrants and improves their capacity to advocate for their own interests. For this purpose, we created an *Advisory Council* in the United States and Canada composed by 126 members, elected democratically by their communities abroad. More than 500 members have been part of 4 generations; they advise us and give us feedback on Mexican public policy directed to them. We also created the *Mexican Talent Network* in recognition of High Skilled Mexican Professionals living abroad. We are using their knowledge, creativity and experience to work in strategic areas and projects that have a positive impact in Mexico. The Network currently has 23 chapters around the World and will continue identifying Mexican Talents to connect them with their country of origin and between them.

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Our reach would not be possible without Mexico's Diplomatic and Consular Network. We have 75 Embassies and 68 Consulates working in 3 main areas of attention: documentation, consular protection and attention to communities abroad. In order to communicate IME's activities and to increase the participation of Mexicans abroad within our programs, we use 77 screens in 46 Consulates in the United States, as well as send an electronic news Bulletin called *Lazos* (ties) on a daily basis, aiming to keep informed with strategic news about migration our more than 17 thousand subscribers.

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A new Mexico is emerging. We are developing a new relationship with our diaspora, committing to consolidate Mexicans Abroad as successful role models and development agents. Our President, Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, has included in the National Development Plan, the importance of protecting the interests of Mexicans Abroad, as a central duty of a responsible foreign policy.

Mexico is a country with global responsibility. We have experience on diaspora matters, and this experience allows us to share and collaborate with other

countries in their strategic planning to connect with their own diasporas, as well as to learn from their experiences. We hope that the Forum's remarks and conclusions will contribute positively to the UN General Assembly High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development that will be held in October 2013.

We expect that the High Level Dialogue produces a strategic vision to respond in a creative, innovative and, most importantly, human and realistic manner, to the discussion and attention of the migration phenomenon in the medium and long term. As we have expressed in other Forums, we also hope that Migration can be included in Post 2015 UN Development Agenda, in a responsible and measurable manner, based in existing transversal human development indicators.

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Thank you all for your kind attention.