

Press Releases: United States-Mexico Declaration of Principles on Economic Development and Cooperation in Southern Mexico and Central America

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 18, 2018

The United States and Mexico seek to continue modernizing our bilateral engagement to reflect changes in the world and to ensure our citizens directly benefit. We are committed to promoting strong regional economic growth, good jobs, and expanded opportunity for all of our citizens.

This declaration reflects the importance both countries attach to our bilateral relationship. The spirit of cooperation between our countries is strong with institutional, economic, familial, and cultural bonds that link the United States and Mexico and are the foundation of our bilateral relationship.

The United States and Mexico today commit to strengthen and expand our bilateral cooperation to foster development and increase investment in southern Mexico and in Central America to create a zone of prosperity. Both countries recognize the strong links between promoting development and economic growth in southern Mexico and the success of promoting prosperity, good governance, and security in Central America. The United States welcomes the Comprehensive Development Plan launched by the Government of Mexico in concert with the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to promote these goals. The United States and Mexico will lead in working with regional and international partners to build a more prosperous and secure Central America to address the underlying causes of migration, and so that citizens of the region can build better lives for themselves and their families at home.

Promoting Prosperity, Good Governance, and Security in Central America: The United States and Mexico will continue government cooperation and coordination to enhance security, governance, and economic prosperity in Central America, complementing the Northern Triangle countries' Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity. The United States is committing a total of \$5.8

billion in support of institutional reforms, development, and economic growth in the Northern Triangle from public and private sources. The United States and Mexico will also work with the U.S. and Mexican private sector and multilateral development banks to promote investment and economic development in the Northern Triangle. We will leverage the resources of U.S. and Mexican international development finance capabilities to better target investments in the region.

Cabinet-level Meeting and High Level Taskforce: The Governments of the United States and Mexico will convoke a cabinet-level meeting in late January 2019 to agree on a strategic framework for our cooperation in Central America to address root causes of migration. The United States and Mexico will establish a high-level taskforce to facilitate design and implementation of cooperation and monitor progress on advancing our common objectives.

Investment in Southern Mexico: The United States and Mexico will strengthen coordination with the private sector and development institutions to expand infrastructure and generate employment opportunities in southern Mexico. The government of Mexico has announced the largest development commitment in decades in southern Mexico to include \$25 billion over 5 years. The United States, for its part, through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, is focused on private and public investment in Mexico totaling 4.8 billion, to include committing \$2 billion for suitable projects in southern Mexico. The United States will seek to leverage public and private investment in Mexico and is exploring options of further investment in dialogue with the government of Mexico.

Bilateral Business Summit: The United States and Mexico will convoke a business summit in the first quarter of 2019 with participation by a broad range of U.S., Mexican, and international private sector representatives to increase investment and business opportunities in Mexico with a special focus on southern Mexico and the Northern Triangle.

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[Press Releases: The U.S. Strategy for Central America and Southern Mexico](#)

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 18, 2018

The United States, in partnership with the government of Mexico, is committed to promoting a safer and more prosperous Central America by enhancing security, governance, and economic prosperity that can create greater opportunities and benefits for the people of the region and help us jointly address the shared challenges of migration, narcotics trafficking, and the activities of trans-national criminal organizations. The United States also recognizes that success in achieving these objectives requires an inclusive approach to the wider region. The United States therefore welcomes the historic commitment by the government of Mexico to development in southern Mexico and to promote our shared goals with the countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Furthermore, the United States also wishes to recognize Mexico's willingness to develop a framework to ensure migration occurs in a legal, orderly, and safe manner.

As Vice President Pence stated at the October 11 Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America, "the United States of America has never been more committed to strengthening our partnership with the nations in the Northern Triangle to help ... tackle the problems facing our shared neighborhood." Today, the United States reaffirms that commitment, and sets out our strategy for engagement in 2019, which will include a Ministerial Summit with Mexican counterparts early in the new year; an intensified dialogue with Central American governments with a view to producing results and a roadmap to meeting our shared objectives; and wider dialogue and cooperation with other international actors, as well as international development and financial institutions.

Engagement with El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras

The United States is committing \$5.8 billion through public and private investment to promote institutional reforms and development in the Northern Triangle. Recognizing the importance of promoting economic growth and opportunities for the people of the region, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) has already invested and mobilized more than \$1 billion in the Northern Triangle since 2017 focused on infrastructure, energy, economic growth, and job creation. OPIC could invest and mobilize up to \$2.5 billion more in this region if commercially viable projects are identified. The Millennium Challenge Corporation is providing over \$320 million in funding for infrastructure, education and governance projects El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. At least \$1.8 billion in Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and regional funding for Fiscal Years 2015 to 2018 has been allocated to the Northern Triangle governments of El Salvador,

Guatemala, and Honduras. The Administration is requesting an additional \$180 million in bilateral assistance for the region in our FY 2019 request.

The U.S. strategy complements the Northern Triangle governments' Alliance for Prosperity reform initiative, which seeks to foster the productive sector, develop human capital, improve citizen security and access to justice, strengthen institutions, and improve transparency.

More specifically, the United States' efforts are organized around three overarching lines of action:

- **Security:** U.S. programs combat transnational criminal organizations, stem drug trafficking, enhance citizen security, reduce gang violence, strengthen borders, and deter human smuggling and trafficking by focusing on professionalizing security institutions.
- **Governance:** U.S. assistance supports anti-corruption efforts that improve the ease of doing business, strengthen the rule of law, promote strong institutions and government accountability, reduce impunity, and improve fiscal management by promoting efficient tax collection, civil society engagement, and institutional reform.
- **Prosperity:** U.S. programs promote economic growth, energy and food security, poverty reduction, workforce development, education and training, and greater regional integration to increase jobs for Central Americans, improve opportunities for U.S. and other businesses and reduce illegal migration.

The United States will also continue to work closely with Mexico, international partners, international financial institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, the private sector, and civil society to maximize the impact of U.S. taxpayer investment in the region. The United States and Mexico co-hosted Conferences on Prosperity and Security in Central America in June 2017 and October 2018 and, in consultation with the Northern Triangle governments, identified areas of joint economic and security cooperation for implementation in the region. That cooperation will intensify in 2019 with the appointment of a High-Level Task Force to lead our efforts and produce results.

Southern Mexico

The United States recognizes that a strong, stable, and prosperous Mexico benefits the entire region. The United States is also committed to using all appropriate U.S. government trade and investment promotion and policy tools to support development in Southern Mexico, and to working with the initiative of the Administration of President Lopez Obrador for the development of the region and Northern Triangle countries. The United States takes note of the ambitious plans to promote economic growth, new infrastructure, stronger institutions, and opportunities for the people of southern Mexico as integral components of addressing our shared challenges in the region.

The United States in particular will actively support the goal of leveraging public and private investment in southern Mexico to include dialogue with the Government of Mexico in early 2019. The United States will bolster support for U.S. investment in infrastructure projects that advance the Government of Mexico's agenda of creating opportunity and economic prosperity in southern Mexico.

OPIC is prepared to support this initiative through finance, insurance and investment funds to develop projects that create quality jobs and foster additional economic opportunity. OPIC is prepared to invest and mobilize \$2 billion in additional funds for projects in southern Mexico that are viable and attract private sector investment. This amount is in addition to the \$2.8 billion in projects for Mexico through OPIC's current investment pipeline.

The United States is also committed to providing technical assistance to facilitate project design and implementation for southern Mexico. The United States will consider assistance through the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Export-Import Bank. A High-Level Taskforce which is to be created in early 2019 will help identify opportunities and how U.S. government agencies can be supportive.

Both countries will also open a focused dialogue with other governments assisting the region to urge support for the Government of Mexico's development projects in southern Mexico.

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[Press Releases: To Walk the Earth in Safety 17th Edition: U.S. Global Leadership in Landmine Clearance and Conventional Weapons Destruction](#)

Fact Sheet
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

December 18, 2018

The United States is the world's single largest financial supporter of efforts to address humanitarian hazards from landmines and unexploded ordnance in post-conflict countries and to reduce the availability of excess, loosely-secured, or otherwise at-risk weapons and munitions. Today's release of the 17th edition of *To Walk the Earth in Safety*, the Department of State's annual report summarizing the accomplishments of the U.S. Conventional Weapons Destruction Program, highlights our enduring commitment to making post-conflict communities safer and setting the stage for their recovery and development.

- Since 1993, the United States has invested more than \$3.2 billion for the securing and safe disposal of excess small arms, light weapons, and munitions as well as the safe clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war in more than 100 countries, making the United States the world's single largest financial supporter of conventional weapons destruction.
- The United States has funded programs worldwide aimed at reducing at-risk weapons and munitions and improving stockpile security in order to prevent diversion of arms to terrorists and other destabilizing actors.
- Through the conventional weapons destruction program, the U.S. government has collaborated with partner nations and international organizations since 2003 to destroy more than 39,000 excess or poorly-secured man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS), shoulder-fired missiles that pose a serious potential threat to global aviation in the hands of terrorists or insurgents.
- Working in close cooperation with the Department of Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Leahy War Victims Fund, the Department of State has helped numerous countries to declare themselves mine free.
- Proactive community outreach through our Mine Risk Education programs have prevented countless injuries while U.S.-funded Survivor Assistance has provided essential medical and rehabilitation services to people injured by landmines and unexploded ordnance.

For additional information or to request a printed copy of *To Walk the Earth in Safety*, please contact the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, at pm-cpa@state.gov, and follow us on Twitter @StateDeptPM. The report is also available on the Department of State website at <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rpt/walkearth/index.htm>.

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Press Releases: Establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine

Press Statement
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 17, 2018

The United States congratulates Metropolitan Epifaniy on his election as head of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. The establishment of the Church was a historic moment for Ukraine. The United States maintains unwavering support for Ukraine and respects the freedom to worship unhindered by outside interference. The right to religious freedom extends to all Ukrainians, including those choosing to join – or not to join – the new Orthodox Church.

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Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's

Meeting With New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 17, 2018

The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino: □

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met today with New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters at the Department of State. Secretary Pompeo thanked Foreign Minister Peters for New Zealand's continued support in working towards the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea as agreed to by Chairman Kim Jong Un and for New Zealand's assistance in countering terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. They discussed the strategic relationship between the United States and New Zealand, our strong trade and commercial ties, cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region in partnership with Pacific Island countries, and joint efforts to strengthen the international rules-based order.

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