Mexico’s Moment

**Enrique Peña Nieto, Mexico’s newly elected president, sets out his priorities**

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The continuing global economic slowdown has taken its toll on world development, severely affecting most advanced economies. According to the International Labour Organisation, 600m productive jobs will have to be created around the world over the next decade in order to generate sustainable growth and maintain social cohesion.

Whereas growth in the emerging world has slowed down, major developing economies like Mexico continue to boast solid foundations for future growth and social progress, and the evidence can be found in their quick recovery from the global crisis that erupted in 2007-08. Experts from the financial industry, including Goldman Sachs and Nomura, predict that, by 2020, Mexico’s economy will be among the ten largest in the world. Yet despite these positive developments and forecasts, too many Mexicans remain trapped in poverty and afflicted by high levels of violence and corruption.

On July 1st 2012 Mexicans voted for change. As their president, I am committed to providing a democracy capable of delivering the progress Mexicans need and deserve. To that end, starting from my inauguration on December 1st 2012 and throughout 2013, we will work on building an effective state. We will launch a series of political and economic reforms to help achieve three overarching national goals that will improve the well-being of our country.

First, we need to ensure that the rights of Mexicans become more than mere ideals stated in the constitution. They must be an everyday reality. We will promote a bill that will seek to reform social security so that it becomes a universal right enjoyed by all Mexicans, rather than just the current 40% of the population. We will also need to continue the reform of our educational system, guaranteeing both the genuine exercise of educational rights and the quality of teaching in our effort to transform Mexico into a knowledge society. Mexico has come a long way in the development of its political and civil liberties and I am absolutely committed to their strengthening in a democratic and peaceful country. To this end, we will launch a new national-security strategy to reduce violence and fight drug cartels.

As the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world, we ought to play a key international role

The second national goal is to develop fully our true economic potential. This requires a sound management of public finances and respect for the autonomy of the central bank to ensure continued macroeconomic stability. Competition in key economic sectors needs to become a reality. Therefore, establishing policies that foster competition in all sectors will be imperative.

We are working, therefore, on a number of structural reforms to boost the Mexican economy. Labour reform will increase flexibility without infringing the rights of workers. Fiscal reform will improve the efficiency of the tax system.

In addition, we will implement a far-reaching reform of the energy sector to deal with its pressing problems. Private-public partnerships—a mechanism we will promote across all industries—may foster greater investment in the oil and electricity sectors, allowing Pemex (the national oil company) to remain an engine of development, without having to cede state ownership over our nation’s resources.

Our third goal is for Mexico to regain its leadership on the world stage as an emerging power. As the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world, we ought to play a key international role in economic, cultural and political terms. We must recover our leadership in Latin America with a more active promotion of cultural, social and economic exchanges at both bilateral and regional levels. We have to deepen our strategic partnership with our northern neighbours so that the North American Free-Trade Agreement becomes a renewed engine of growth. At the same time, to diversify our economic relations with the world, we must use the institutional framework that already exists to increase trade and investment with the Asia-Pacific region and the European Union.

**An emerging model**

Last but not least, Mexico will live up to its responsibilities as a member of the international community. We will bolster co-operation in areas of particular interest to our country, such as international migration, climate change and the fight against drug-trafficking and organised crime, and we will emphasise the co-ordination of economic policy and technical co-operation.

Mexico faces many challenges and we are working actively to bring the results that our citizens have a right to expect. In our democracy, we will work for a prosperous economic, political and social model in which pragmatism and the respect of liberal values coexist. This should not only fulfil our potential but can also become a source of inspiration for other emerging economies.