

Round Table on Democracy at a Crossroads: The Challenge of the Illicit Financing of Politics

Wednesday, December 2, 2009 | Special Events/Communications Office of the Presidency



Mexico City. Earlier today, President Felipe Calderón took part in a round table on Democracy at a Crossroads: The Challenge of the Illicit Financing of Politics, at the Adolfo López Mateos Hall of the official Los Pinos residence. The Round Table is an invitation by the Mexican Government to debate the challenges and complexities of the political and electoral system from a comparative perspective. The aim is to reduce the risk of corruption, by encouraging the transparency of political action.

During the round tables, attendees will share the experiences of applying different schemes of financing for politics, while stressing the importance of boosting the autonomy of political forces regarding donors' particular interests. The final aim is to generate a comparative discussion on the risks of corruption and to highlight the importance of the transparency of political action. The panelists are from Sweden, Argentina, Spain, the United States, Rumania, India, Pakistan, Colombia, Russia, England and Mexico, among others. The Round Table will last 2 days and is being held at the Foreign Affairs Secretariat, whereby the Mexican Government is confirming its commitment to incorporating the best international practices into the country's democratic life.

Offices involved include the Foreign Affairs Secretariat, Federal Electoral Institute, UNAM Institute of Legal Research, Electoral Court of Judicial Branch of the Federation, and the Interior Secretariat.

Objective of the event:

- Encourage the exchange of international experiences regarding the illicit financing of politics, within the context of the current greatest challenges of democracy.
- Create public awareness of the scope and negative effects of the illicit financing of politics
- Analyze the impact of illicit financing on democratic institutions and processes in various regions and countries.
- Discuss the direct and indirect causes of the phenomenon-including those related to the broader socio-economic and human safety context and identify the best practices for dealing with them.
- Identify specific issues within the topic that need to be dealt with through additional research, analysis and programmatic development, by IDEA International. These issues may include: Alternative financing schemes, limits on political parties' spending, controls and sanctions, the role of civil society in the debate, etc.
- Explore opportunities and the potential for establishing networks and institutional associations for boosting the search for effective answers to the problem at both the regional and international level.
- Make preliminary recommendations to provide institutional and legal responses and both national and international initiatives to effectively cope with the problem of the illicit financing of politics.

Topics:

- Unexpected challenges of democracy throughout the world; the problem of illicit financing and its political impact.
- Democratic institutions and processes (campaigns, elections, political parties, civil servants) and their vulnerability to illicit financing; links with organized crime; abuse of economic power for achieving political objectives: analyze the symptoms and explore their causes.
- Alternatives and resources for coordinated institutional responses and national and international public policies. Sharing experiences of best practices, identifying new paths on the research agenda and possible links in order to suggest recommendations.

MEXICO IS RE-ELECTED TO THE FAO COUNCIL

Wednesday, December 2, 2009 | Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Mexico City.- During the 36th session of the General Conference of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Mexico was reelected by consensus to the organization's council for the 2011-2013 period. Mexico's candidacy had the endorsement of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) in recognition of the fact that Mexico is the tenth-largest contributor to the FAO's ordinary budget of the organization's 191 member States, and the biggest contributor in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Council, made up of 49 members, is the executive organ of the FAO and is in charge of examining the organization's current and future activities. It receives assistance from the technical committees on programme, finance, Constitutional and legal matters, fisheries, forestry, agriculture, commodity problems and world food security. As a member of the council, Mexico will strengthen its presence in the FAO and will seek to influence the debate on and focus of the budget and of the organization's work program, with a view towards optimizing the use of resources and achieving passage of projects that benefit the Latin American and Caribbean region. Mexico is committed to the goal of reducing by half the number of individuals suffering from hunger and malnutrition around the world by the year 2015 and will play an active role in the FAO in shaping proposals to promote agricultural development through the transfer of appropriate technologies. In addition, Mexico will seek to assure that international cooperation is given to all of the developing regions in need of it and will urge that special attention is paid to the Central American and Caribbean countries.

Mexico was also reelected by consensus to the FAO Finance Committee for the 2010-2011 period and to the Executive Board of the World Food Program for the 2010-2012 period during the 138th session of the FAO Council in Rome. Both Mexican candidacies were endorsed by GRULAC. Mexico is the only country in Latin America and the Caribbean who is simultaneously a member of all of the executive bodies of the organizations for food and agriculture with headquarters in Rome: FAO, WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This gives Mexico a comprehensive view of the work that each international organization does within its respective area of competence and of how they complement each other. It is also able to defend the interests of the region's countries and its own, and to promote increased cooperation for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mexico is Re-elected to the Council of the International Maritime Organization for 2009-2011

Friday, November 27, 2009 | Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mexico City.- Mexico was reelected today as one of the 40 members of the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the executive body of the IMO, for a period of two years during the 26th meeting of the IMO General Assembly that is being held in London.



The IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is made up of 166 member States. The IMO's goal is to encourage and facilitate the adoption of international standards related to maritime safety, efficiency of navigation and prevention and control of marine pollution from ships. Mexico has been a member of the IMO since 1954 and has been a member of the Council since 1986 without interruption. The Council is the executive body of the IMO that is responsible for supervising the organization's work.

Mexico's reelection to the council will allow it to:

- Support safe maritime operations based on the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW/78/95) and its International Safety Management Code and the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue;
- Help protect the marine environment through the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and its annexes; the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage; the Convention of Civil Liability for Damage from Pollution by Oil and the London Convention on the Dumping of Wastes and Other Matters;
- Participate in technical cooperation activities between the members and in the resources and institutions needed to encourage international cooperation in implementing the IMO's main instruments;

With its reelection, Mexico renews its commitment to the goal of achieving clean seas and trustworthy, protected and safe maritime transportation for the benefit of the international community.

IN SPITE OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS, MEXICO IS A RELIABLE DESTINATION FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT

- Gruas GH, a Spanish company, opened a new manufacturing plant with an investment of 72 million pesos and created 42 new jobs.
- Mexico is now well established as a wonderful destination for investment: Bruno Ferrari.

The Spanish company Gruas GH inaugurated new facilities in Queretaro-involving an investment of 72 million pesos and the creation of 42 new jobs-where it will manufacture traveling cranes and other elevation components that are used to handle heavy materials in various industries.



During the inauguration of the facilities, Gruas GH also celebrated 10 years of operations in Mexico.

Gruas GH manufactures equipment to handle large materials, such as rotating arm cranes; pneumatic and submersible gantries; elevating platforms for ships, among others, which are used in the aeronautic and wind industries, shipyards, iron warehouses and construction sites and for handling scrap and solid waste. The company has offices in 50 countries and has more than 500 workers around the world.

Bruno Ferrari, Chairman of ProMexico, who represented Felipe Calderon, President of Mexico, during the inauguration, said that the new facilities help position Mexico as the ideal investment destination, because we are showing that we focus on creating optimum conditions for trade.

"Even with the unfavorable conditions of international markets, Mexico has reinforced its position as an incredible destination for investment; we have looked to turn every challenge we face into a valuable opportunity that allows us to travel quickly and safely down the road of development," said the federal official.

During the event, where the CEO of GH Spain, Jose Antonio Guerra Altuna, and the CEO of Gruas GH Mexico, Pedro Luis Garcia, were present, Ferrari said that the inauguration of this new plant ratifies the trust that such an important company has in our country and our institutions. According to him, it is now the government's task to maintain the level of competitiveness of our economy.

"The Federal Government is committed to turning Mexico into the best place to invest, that is why we receive with open arms companies such as Gruas GH, whose presence in Queretaro will undoubtedly bring a better quality of life for all the people in the state and in the country, because it will generate jobs and help develop this industry," said Ferrari.

Pedro Luis García said that the opening of this 4,000 square meter plant is the result of the competitive advantages that the Mexican market offers and its leadership in the industry. He said that there are 700 cranes installed in the country and that with this investment, Gruas GH Mexico will become the only company with the ability to produce one unit daily.

Gruas GH was founded in 1956 with the goal of manufacturing components for equipment used to lift and store heavy materials. Headquartered in Beasain, Spain, the company has six production facilities, three of which are located in Spain. Today, they have offices in Spain, France, Brazil, the United States and China, and distributors in countries such as Belgium, Greece, Egypt, Angola, Indonesia, Venezuela, Chile and Argentina.

Mexico City's Metrobus Awarded

Mexico City.- The Mexico City Metrobus received the 2009 Roy Family Award for Environmental Partnership from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The Mexico City Metrobus is a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that has significantly reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in the world's second largest city. This award is presented bi-annually and recognizes an outstanding public-private partnership project that enhances environmental quality through the use of novel and creative approaches.

The Mexico City Metrobus, which carries 450,000 passengers per day, is the result of a successful collaboration among several public and private institutions including the Government of Mexico City, EMBARQ (The World Resources Institute Center for Sustainable Transport) and CEIBA (a Mexican NGO). Support includes funding from the Shell Foundation, Caterpillar Foundation, William & Flora Hewlett Foundation and the World Bank.



By introducing buses that operate on clean-burning ultra low sulfur diesel fuel and convincing many commuters to leave their cars at home, the Metrobus system has reduced carbon dioxide emissions from Mexico City traffic by an estimated 80,000 tons per year. In addition, due to the expansion of the system, a total of 839 polluting mini-buses have been permanently removed from the roads. New Metrobus corridors are planned and will expand the system to ten corridors by 2012.

The Metrobus system is part of Mexico City's Climate Action Plan, which is focused on making Mexico City one of the most environmentally-conscious and sustainable cities in the world. The 15-year plan is designed to reduce transportation-related emissions; conserve public lands through major reforestation projects; encourage businesses to adopt sustainable environmental practices; invest in critical environmental infrastructure such as water management systems and recycling centers and implement reforms regarding the disposal of solid waste.

Mexico City, which is an active member of C40 Cities-Climate Leadership Group, a group of world cities promoting action and cooperation on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, is investing more than 1 billion USD on environmental-related infrastructure and implementing sustainable environmental programs and practices.

Mexico's Fact of the Week

Electronics, a winning formula

In 2010 the electronics industry will be switching to a new high-tech cluster in Mexico. Alliances are being forged between emerging clusters all across the country, fostering projects to realize Mexico's vision for itself as an international bridge and a strong hand for Latin America.

It is the newest member of Mexico's industrial family, and the flexibility of its productive capacity makes it a sturdy partner at times of international crisis. In 2010, the electronics and technology industry, comprising around 3,000 business units, will seek to consolidate Mexico's emerging clusters and form international alliances in the fields of design, production and services.

Mexican Consulate developed campaign against Domestic Violence

San Diego.- The General Consulate of Mexico developed an informational campaign among the Mexican community to raise awareness on the issue of domestic violence. The campaign consisted of distribution of pamphlets explaining different forms of domestic violence and listing useful resources to seek help and guidance. The campaign also included a series of TV spots that were broadcast on the main local Spanish language networks.



More than 1,600 informative pamphlets were distributed during September-November, 2009. The points of distribution for the campaign in San Diego county were the waiting room of the Consulate's office (through the Window of Health program); community fairs, adult learning centers (Plazas Comunitarias) and sites of meetings with community leaders.

The initiative is part of Mexico's National Program for Gender Equality 2008-2012, whose main objectives are improving case management procedures for victims of domestic violence, strengthening information campaigns to facilitate complaints and offering legal assistance and documentation when necessary.

Digital Library commemorating Mexico's Bicentennial of its Independence



As part of Mexico's celebrations for the Bicentennial of its Independence and the Centenary of its Revolution, the Mexican Government has launched a digital library with more than 450 titles.

The Bicentennial Digital Library is an online collection of digitalized books referring to different scenes of Mexican Independence and Mexican Revolution, as well as literary pieces in which the spirit of both events is portrayed.

Many of these pieces are not available now, either because publishing houses ran out of stock or because they are antique or unique editions. Readers are allowed to read each one of these books and "feel" the color, typography and even the texture it had when first published, with a plus: the book is always available as readers can save it in their computer or mobile devices.

For more information, please visit the official web page of Mexico's Bicentennial of Independence:
<http://www.bicentenario.gob.mx/english/>



Video: 200 years of History:

http://www.bicentenario.gob.mx/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=94&Itemid=83



Video: Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla:

http://www.bicentenario.gob.mx/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=106&Itemid=83



Video: Zapata: the love of the Land:

http://www.bicentenario.gob.mx/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=100&Itemid=83



Video: José Maria Morelos

http://www.bicentenario.gob.mx/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=96&Itemid=83



Video: Francisco Villa: the struggle for justice

http://www.bicentenario.gob.mx/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=101&Itemid=83