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Joint Statement by President Barack Obama of the United States and President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico

May 2, 2013

At the invitation of President Enrique Peña Nieto, President Barack Obama travelled to Mexico City on May 2–3 to discuss the broad range of bilateral, regional, and global issues that bind the United States and Mexico and touch the daily lives of citizens of both countries. Building on their positive initial meeting in Washington, D.C. last November, the two Presidents renewed their commitment to the United States-Mexico relationship.

Looking ahead to the next 4 years during which their presidencies will overlap, the two leaders noted the importance of taking advantage of opportunities and harnessing the enthusiasm and optimism that a new stage in bilateral relations brings. The Presidents underscored the strategic importance of the bilateral relationship and expressed a desire for even greater cooperation between their two nations. Specifically, the Presidents focused on: 1) economic competitiveness; 2) people-to-people connections; 3) leadership on regional and global issues; and 4) citizen security.

Economic Competitiveness

Underpinning our successful United States-Mexico economic relationship are trade and investment flows that support jobs in both countries. Bilateral trade was almost half a trillion dollars in 2012.

The two Presidents agreed on the need to continue forging a close and productive economic relationship to enhance their nations' competitiveness and to create more trade and investment opportunities. With this purpose, they decided to establish a High Level Economic Dialogue, which will be chaired at the cabinet level and focus on promoting competitiveness, productivity and connectivity, fostering economic growth and innovation, and partnering for global leadership. The leaders intend for the first meeting of the Dialogue to take place later this year, include representatives from relevant agencies and departments from both governments, and engage with relevant stakeholders, notably the private sector.

The two leaders also discussed the importance of the United States and Mexico working together, and with their Canadian partners, to make North America the most dynamic and competitive region in the world. They agreed to seek a successful conclusion to a high-standard Trans-Pacific Partnership this year that includes 21st century provisions that significantly strengthen the North American Free Trade Agreement. They also reiterated their commitment to the resolution of specific trade issues between their countries, and their interest in maintaining close coordination with regards to other relevant trade negotiations.

The Presidents also underscored the importance to both countries of a secure and efficient shared border. They noted the recent meeting of the 21st Century Border Management Executive Steering Committee, the first under President Peña Nieto's tenure, and agreed to support key projects and initiatives that improve infrastructure, support the efforts of local communities, facilitate the secure flow of legitimate trade and travel, and enhance law enforcement cooperation along the border.

President Obama and President Peña Nieto welcomed the positive steps the U.S. Congress is taking to implement the Transboundary Hydrocarbon Agreement, which will enhance energy security in North America and bolster the two countries' responsible stewardship of the Gulf of Mexico. They look forward to full implementation of the Agreement.

People-to-People Connections

The two leaders underscored the broad and deep connections that exist between the peoples of both countries, and their importance to the prosperity and culture of both societies.

The Presidents agreed to establish a Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation, and Research. It should start meeting this year and bring together government, academia, and civil society to develop a shared vision on educational cooperation and propose concrete short-term and mid-term initiatives to promote bilateral collaboration and policy coordination.

Both Presidents expressed support for the U.S. government's "100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative" as a way of enhancing academic mobility between Mexico and the United States.

President Obama noted that the bipartisan immigration bill recently introduced in the U.S. Senate was largely consistent with the principles he has repeatedly laid out. He reiterated his commitment to commonsense immigration reform that would institute a fair and effective immigration system that lives up to the United States' heritage as a nation of laws and recognizes the extraordinary contributions of immigrants, including generations of immigrants from Mexico, to make the United States a strong and vibrant Nation. President Peña Nieto recognized President Obama's efforts to advance this issue, and reaffirmed the Government of Mexico's commitment to supporting the wellbeing of Mexicans living abroad.

Global and Regional Leadership

The Presidents underscored the importance of their countries' cooperation on regional and international issues. These include job creation through sustained economic growth, the protection of human rights, gender equality, democratic governance, and addressing the challenges of climate change. They emphasized the importance of the Equal Futures Partnership, which Mexico will formally join, as a multilateral effort to expand women's economic empowerment and political participation.

As part of a commitment to working together in Central American and the hemisphere, the two Leaders noted a recently concluded Memorandum of Understanding for International Cooperation between the Secretariat of Foreign Relation's Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that will promote joint activities concerning development and cooperation with third countries. The two Presidents also reaffirmed their support to increased interconnection of electricity grids in the Americas, for example through the Connecting the Americas 2022 initiative launched at the Sixth Summit of the Americas.

Citizen Security

The Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to act as co-responsible partners through a renewed collaborative approach to citizen security. President Peña Nieto discussed the importance of ensuring a peaceful Mexico, as one of the five main pillars of his government's strategy, and of preventing crime by addressing the conditions that contribute to its occurrence, and strengthening institutions and the rule of law.

President Obama reiterated U.S. support for Mexico's efforts, and in particular for the transition to an accusatory system of justice that is transparent, effective, and efficient. The Presidents also emphasized the importance of continued actions against transnational organized crime, enhanced counter-illicit finance and arms trafficking efforts, and measures to reduce drug use and its consequences.

Presidents Obama and Peña Nieto will remain in close consultation on these and other issues of mutual interest, in order to further advance the partnership between their nations.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Categories: Joint Statements : Mexico, President Peña Nieto.

Names: Peña Nieto, Enrique.

Subjects: Canada : Relations with Mexico; Canada : Relations with U.S.; Commerce, international : North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); Education : Foreign exchange programs; Education : Global competitiveness; Immigration and naturalization : American "melting pot"; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Mexico : Border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Mexico : Energy cooperation with U.S.; Mexico : President's visit; Mexico : Relations with Canada; Mexico : Relations with U.S.; Mexico : Student exchanges with U.S.; Mexico : Trade with U.S.; Mexico: President; Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

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