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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

The August 2009 North American Leaders Summit cemented and further propelled a rapidly advancing security partnership between the United States and Mexico that is changing both how widely and how deeply the two countries collaborate. Commending President Calderón for his determination and courage in taking on the cartels, President Obama said, "...the United States will remain a full partner in this effort. The United States will work to make sure Mexico has the support it needs to dismantle and defeat the cartels, and to meet its responsibilities by continuing efforts to reduce the demand for drugs and continuing to strengthen the security of our shared border."

The Merida Initiative, launched in 2007, opened a new era of cooperation between the United States and Mexico. At the North America Leaders Summit, Presidents Obama and Calderón pledged to move collaboration efforts "beyond Merida." In September 2009, Secretaries Clinton and Espinosa agreed on four strategic goals defining ongoing cooperation. Coordinated efforts are focused on achieving four strategic goals:

- Disrupt and Dismantle Drug Trafficking Organizations
- Institutionalize Capacity to Sustain Rule of Law
- Create a 21st Century Border
- Build Strong and Resilient Communities

Mexico and the United States have moved forward in a number of areas critical to these goals and in the national interest of the United States and Mexico.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Peace and Security

The United States and Mexico have taken advantage of the historic opportunity to expand their cooperative efforts in the areas of counterterrorism, stabilization operations and security sector reform, counternarcotics, and other transnational crimes.

Resources provided by the Merida Initiative enhanced the Mexican military's surveillance and interdiction capabilities, and improved their capability to protect critical petroleum assets in the Bay of Campeche. International Military Education and Training activities strengthened military-to-military relationships, which are vital for developing partnerships for the security of North America and improving operations in the current conflicts facing both Mexico and the United States.

Threats posed by drug cartels and other criminal organizations to regional stability have been highlighted by attacks on Mexican police and military, as well as the discovery of sophisticated weapons caches. The Office of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms has led USG support to bolster Mexico's capacity to identify arms and explosives. The Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and numerous other agencies are engaged in strengthening Mexican law-enforcement capacity.

Mexico's southern border with Guatemala presents a real threat to Mexican and United States interests as a possible point for organized crime, drugs, arms, and trafficked persons. The Government of Mexico (GOM) has already begun work to control the movement of goods and people across the southern border. With assistance from the State Department's Narcotics Affairs Section and Merida Initiative funding, the GOM began installing an enhanced Migratory Operation System (MOS) along this border. The MOS entails the installation of passport readers, as well as biometric identification equipment in order to monitor who enters or leaves the country via land or air. Once fully deployed, the MOS will help identify potential hostile actors and allow local law enforcement to take preventative action.

In FY 2009, Merida Initiative funding provided the GOM with 30 handheld ion scanners and 15 mobile x-ray vans, as well as training on how to operate these devices, which can be used to help interdict illicit materials. This capability is critical for intercepting arms and cash utilized by drug-trafficking organizations that have enabled these groups to resemble paramilitary forces. The Merida Initiative in Central America (called the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) as of FY 2010) funded canine training augmented this effort. The canine program gave Mexico another tool to help detect the illegal flow of weapons entering the country.

USG assistance in FY 2009 supported security sector reforms, training of Mexican personnel, and provision of advanced military and law enforcement equipment. Merida funding purchased four Bell helicopters, other fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, light watercraft, and other equipment to bolster interdiction and law enforcement efforts. The U.S. Department of Defense provided targeted training and exchanges to multiple branches of the Mexican military. Three thousand federal police went through advanced training in the national police center in San Luis Potosí. Merida Initiative funds were utilized to help create training programs as well as provide U.S. and international instructors who expanded the skills of Mexican law enforcement personnel in advanced surveillance techniques, cyber-security, as well as weapons detection and interdiction. In addition, both militaries continued to coordinate on counter-drug operations.

United States and Mexican law-enforcement personnel are increasingly able to share sensitive tactical information, resulting in more frequent interdiction operations that garner larger hauls. Closer bilateral coordination with Mexico led to the capture and prosecution of top-level narcotics traffickers.

The Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement is working closely with Mexico's Attorney General on an initiative –“Armas Cruzadas (Crossed Arms)”– that publicizes the severe penalties in both countries for trafficking in firearms, and encourages the reporting of suspicious gun transactions to a toll-free number. USG and Mexican officials cooperated on operations targeting illegal transactions at U.S. gun shows where buyers were arrested after crossing into Mexico for illicit possession of a firearm and export violations. The USG supported Mexico's efforts to increase the inspection of traffic at the shared border. At the same time, the United States increased the frequency and coverage of its own southbound inspections, targeting the flow of illegal weapons and cash into Mexico.

Governing Justly and Democratically

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) worked with the Mexican Office of the Attorney General to improve data collection and crime statistics analysis. Judicial exchanges provided professional and continuing education for police investigators, prosecutors, defense attorneys, court administrators, and judges. USAID supported Mexico-United States law school university partnerships to help Mexican universities develop new legal education programs for the practice of law under adversarial proceedings. USAID supported the training of over 23,500 justice sector personnel and other professional and civil society members on the new code of criminal procedure.

Merida funding strengthened institutions and supported human rights through victim protection and restitution. Merida-funded programs provided technical assistance to Mexico's policy makers, who draft states' secondary laws and implementation plans, and training for justice system actors who will implement the reforms. USAID worked with civil society organizations to promote their participation in implementing the reforms. USAID assistance strengthened the coordination between police and prosecutors, professionalized the public defense and Attorney General's Office, supported case resolution alternatives, and enhanced services for indigenous populations.

Economic Growth

Much has been done to strengthen enforcement of existing laws and regulations in order to improve the business-enabling environment. USAID's economic growth programming supported the introduction and implementation of regulatory and administrative changes that positively affect competitiveness. USAID supported increased access to private capital for states and municipalities, helping to build Mexico's capital markets while encouraging sound planning for infrastructure development. The State of Quintana Roo accessed the peso equivalent of \$150 million in private-sector financing.

USAID assistance also supported GOM efforts to develop a climate change strategy in preparation for the Copenhagen meeting held in December 2009, and for the follow-on meeting that will be held in Mexico in 2010. USAID provided critical organizational and logistical support to the Ministry of the Environment in two international events: World Environment Day, and the third preparatory meeting of the Major Economies Forum on Climate Change, hosted by Mexico. The Forum was launched by President Obama to facilitate a candid dialogue among key developed and

developing countries and generate the political leadership to achieve successful climate change negotiations.

In addition, USAID supported activities related to Reduced Emissions through Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), including the development of two land-use plans in the Ocote Reserve in Chiapas, the evaluation of carbon sampling by a nongovernmental organization (NGO) and two research centers, and a methodology for the proposed carbon baseline, which will inform the development of a national REDD strategy and are important for the creation and implementation of voluntary carbon markets.

Investing in People

USAID's programs reached more than 160,000 at-risk individuals with HIV prevention messages. More than 300 people were trained to reduce stigma and discrimination, improve quality of care, and encourage vulnerable groups to seek timely diagnosis and treatment.

In FY 2009, the USG focused on enhancing community-based, quality Directly Observed Therapy, Short Course (DOTS); expanding advocacy, communication, and social mobilization activities; and supporting improved management in drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB). USAID-supported projects have increased TB detection rates by 10 percent. Successes are in part attributable to a multi-sectoral approach to TB, and to the availability of trained, committed DOTS workers, contributing to a person-centered approach that facilitates treatment completion.

Host country commitment to TB control is strong, and successful cooperation with the National TB Program (NTP) office has been a significant contributing factor. However, a number of factors, including political changes, the worldwide financial crisis, and the 2009 H1N1 influenza emergency, may adversely impact future GOM efforts, challenging the sustainability of advances achieved as of FY 2009. NTP budgetary support has suffered a serious reduction.

FY 2009 funds supported university partnerships providing scholarships, exchanges, joint research, internships, and Master's level programs focused on areas such as small business development and microfinance, environment, education, technological innovation, health and work force training, as well as rule of law. Community college scholarships, funded under a regional USAID program, provided two years of vocational training in the United States for Mexican youth, and one year technical training for primary school teachers from rural, poor, indigenous areas.

A partnership established in 2006 continued to strengthen Mexican Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) in the areas of research, technology, human resources, government contracting, and international trade. A total of 900 counselors have been trained in 190 institutions nationwide. Almost 60 centers have been established and have provided service to 32,000 small- and medium-sized enterprises, creating and preserving more than 12,000 jobs since the start of the partnership. A total of 150 new businesses were created and 132 expanded. Due to its success, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is adopting the SBDC model as part of its economic development strategy in Mexico.

Humanitarian Assistance

In Chiapas, USG disaster readiness activities mitigated direct threats to biodiversity such as forest fires, landslides, and floods in critical watersheds. Technical assistance from several USG agencies provided training to the Mexican Forest Commission, National Parks Commission, communities, and NGO personnel on best practices in watershed management, low-impact rural roads, and soil restoration for the purpose of ecosystem and livelihood protection in the face of natural disasters.