



Migration, Development, and Human Rights in the United States and Mexico
Policy recommendations for both governments

September 2011¹

Just over a year ago, the bodies of 72 migrants coldly murdered were found outside a town in the Northern Mexican state of Tamaulipas, exposing just one of the many horrors often experienced by migrants in transit from Central and South America on their journey through Mexico to the United States. In the United States, the months that followed the Tamaulipas massacre saw several states following Arizona's lead in passing harsh legislation targeting undocumented migrants and the U.S. Congress voting to cut 20% from the International Affairs budget for FY2011, reducing food and development projects.

In 2010, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and the Mexican organization *Iniciativa Ciudadana para la Promoción de la Cultura del Diálogo* (IC) began joint work on the linkages between migration and development, culminating in a strategy meeting in Washington, DC on June 9, 2010, attended by migrant leaders, academics, politicians, lawmakers, and civil society activists from Mexico and the United States, and a limited number from Central America. One conclusion of this meeting was that in order to discuss immigration, it is essential to understand the economic and social reasons that are the root causes of outward migration. Secondly, incorporating the concept of the human rights of migrants into the discussion on the linkages between migration and development provides a more comprehensive framework for addressing the different governments' human rights responsibilities in all of the stages of the migratory process (origin, transit, and destination), and it links the countries involved through co-responsibility and co-development. This policy brief, a result of input received during the June 2010 meeting and since updated, analyzes these areas and presents concrete policy recommendations for the U.S. and Mexican governments.

Role of unbalanced economic and trade policies

Migration is not simply an issue of population flows but is based on the political and economic realities in the United States, Mexico, and the Central American countries. It is the direct result of an increasing precariousness and vulnerability regarding economic and social development in the communities of origin of the migrants and of the absence of long-term public policies to redress poverty and inequality. The imposed economic policies of trade liberalization and structural adjustments are primary causes for outward migration. The lack of economic opportunities in their own countries forces people to leave their homes and make the treacherous journey to the United States in order to seek jobs to support their families and themselves.

¹ This policy paper was originally written by Vicki Gass and Maureen Meyer from the Washington Office on Latin America and Carlos Heredia and John Burstein from *Iniciativa Ciudadana para la Promoción de la Cultura del Diálogo*

Establishing a *de facto* international labor market, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean have become an important source of “cheap labor” for many U.S. industries in addition to agriculture, such as construction, landscaping, building cleaning and maintenance, food preparation, and meat and poultry processing. While the United States depends on this workforce, it has not adapted its immigration laws to reflect this reality. Therefore, the labor market in question is characterized by extraordinary costs borne by the laborers (payments associated with displacement), savings by the employers, as well as social and political costs of varied sorts.

Toward partially governing the broader regional economies, the governments of the region have undertaken two trade pacts with the United States, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, 1994) and the Dominican Republic – Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA, 2005), precisely with an argument that access to the U.S. market for products from these countries would favor local job creation and curtail northward migration. Yet the agricultural and manufacturing policies implemented in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean have favored large-scale and capital intensive producers and their international partners instead of promoting local development or supporting small to medium producers in rural areas where poverty is concentrated. The agricultural sector was further harmed by the Mexican government’s unilateral decision to accelerate the schedule of U.S. agricultural imports as established in the trade agreement.

Viewed through the lens of macro-economic indicators, NAFTA and DR-CAFTA are resounding successes. For example, according to the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University, Mexican exports to the U.S. increased fourfold while foreign direct investment jumped to more than three times pre-NAFTA levels. But instead of creating new employment, jobs were eliminated by imports. In Mexico, for example, at least 2 million peasants and small farmers lost their livelihoods as a direct result of the flooding of U.S. exports of cheap corn and other commodities into Mexican markets since the start of NAFTA. Lacking the technology and high government subsidies enjoyed by their counterparts to the north and faced with government policies that failed to support small to medium scale agricultural production, these farmers were simply unable to compete. The modest job creation in Mexican manufacturing – just 600,000 total – and modest growth in the service sector could not absorb the displaced agricultural workers.² Not surprisingly, informal sector employment has increased significantly to where it represents 57% of the economically active population in the 15 year period – now completed – of the NAFTA-mandated transformations in the political economy of Mexico.

Formal job creation was further weakened by slow economic growth. In the three decades prior to NAFTA, the Mexican economy grew 3.5% per year; post NAFTA it was at an average historic low of 1.6% per year. Mexico’s dependence on the U.S. economy has also meant that it has been greatly impacted by the recent economic crisis in the United States. In a July 2011 report, Mexico’s National Council to Evaluate Social Development Policies (CONEVAL) stated that from 2008 to 2010, the number of people living in poverty in Mexico increased by 3.2 million, for a total of 52 million people in poverty in the country.³

Compounding the dismal economic situation further are the investment chapters in NAFTA and other trade agreements that legally restrict the ability of the Mexican government to ensure that foreign investors link with national producers so that exports include national content. Finally, the structural

² Rethinking Trade Policy for Development: Lessons from Mexico under NAFTA, by Eduardo Zepeda, Timothy A. Wise and Kevin P. Gallagher, Carnegie Endowment Policy Outlook, December 2009. (Also available in Spanish).

³ Hanako Taniguchi, “La pobreza aumentó en México desde 2008 y se sitúa en 52 millones,” CNN en español, July 29, 2011. <http://mexico.cnn.com/nacional/2011/07/29/en-mexico-viven-52-millones-de-pobres-segun-la-coneval>

adjustment policies which privatized state-owned industries and cut social services delivered another blow to Mexicans, especially in the rural sector where poverty is concentrated. Almost identical policies have been in place in Central America, formalized by the DR-CAFTA. As NAFTA and CAFTA demonstrate, increasing trade and investment is not a substitute for a comprehensive development strategy that combines economic growth with equality.

“Les necesitamos pero no les queremos”⁴

The economic model that promised to create jobs and economic opportunities is at the root of the massive exodus from Mesoamerica (Central America and Mexico) to the United States. Unlike liberalized trade in goods and services, the free movement of labor was not included in the trade deals. Today, there are more than 11 million immigrants without U.S. documents living in the United States. Sixty percent of this population is Mexican and another 20% are from other Latin American countries; while an increasing percentage of Mexican migrants hail from urban areas, rural migration continues to be disproportionately higher, and in Central America too the majority of international emigrants are from the rural sector.

Alarmed at the exodus, people from these countries perceive that having their “citizens as the biggest export” is part of a government strategy. Indeed, while they have dropped in the last year, remittances are a substantial source of foreign income in Mexico and in countries such as Guatemala remittances are the largest source of foreign income. On the one hand, outward migration is an escape valve that eases social tensions caused by lack of employment opportunities and low wages. On the other, migration is a way to contribute to the fiscal health of its citizens and the governments as beneficiaries of the remittances sent back by migrants living in the U.S. A 2010 study by the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC) showed that Mexican and Salvadoran migrants generate significant income for the national budgets of their home countries through consumption, or value added taxes (VAT). Remittances not only contribute to reducing poverty and to implementing development projects, they also contribute to the country’s fiscal health. In 2007, VAT income generated by remittances sent to El Salvador in 2007 totaled \$194.7 million, representing 12.8% of the central government’s social expenses.⁵

Similarly, undocumented immigrants in the U.S. contribute to government coffers at the state and federal levels through paying taxes on income, payroll, property and sales taxes. Nevertheless, immigration in the U.S. policy debates is seen as a domestic issue; migrants are erroneously seen as an economic burden and a security threat. Missing from the debate are analyses of the economic benefits to the receiving country and the economic and political decisions made by governments that have effectively forced people to leave their homes and become economic refugees.

The human rights of migrants

Incorporating human rights into the discussion on the linkages between migration and development provides a more comprehensive framework for addressing all stages of the migratory process as well as the responsibilities of the countries of origin, transit and residence to protect the human rights of migrants. Their legal status certainly influences the quality of their working conditions, and migrant workers in general face several labor and civil rights challenges including unsafe working conditions, low salaries, unpaid wages and harassment, among other abuses.

⁴ “We need you all but we don’t want you.”

⁵ NALACC, “Paying Their Share: Migrants’ Contribution to fiscal health in Mexico and El Salvador”, An initiative of NALACC with the Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias (CRIM) of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and the Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo (FUNDE) of El Salvador, Mexico City, March 2010, p. 4.

Temporary migrant worker programs have been promoted as the opportunity to work abroad “legally” and have higher earnings than at home, but they are an instrument undermining labor rights. In their current form these programs include the de-regulation of employment standards, they erode social protection for workers and their families and discourage unionization. For the sending countries, migrant worker programs are unjust and unjustifiable substitutes for governments shirking their responsibilities to implement comprehensive development strategies that reduce poverty and inequality.

While violations of the labor rights of migrants are one of the clearest examples of the vulnerability of migrants, there is a series of other human rights concerns for migrants in the United States and Mexico that must be addressed, as outlined below.

United States

The United States frames its immigration policy on border and population control, investing billions of dollars in border security, the deportation of undocumented migrants, tamper-resistant identity documents, etc. While much attention has been placed on the plight of migrants in the U.S. in recent years, many of the practices that negatively affect their rights occurred in the changes to immigration laws in 1996. These changes significantly increased the number of people subject to mandatory, prolonged and indefinite detention and the practice of the expedited removal of noncitizens without a hearing or review by an immigration judge. They also removed immigration judges’ discretionary power to order the release of detained individuals not deemed a flight risk or who do not present a danger to society.⁶ Expanded regulations for detention are particularly concerning given the multiple reports of widespread problems in detention centers including lack of access to telephones, attorneys, and legal materials. In addition, centers have been allowed to continue to operate despite multiple findings that they have violated detention standards.⁷

During the last two years of the Bush Administration, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) “greatly expanded the use of home raid operations as a method to locate and apprehend individuals suspected of civil immigration law violations.” A study by the Cardozo Immigration Justice Clinic found many examples of ICE agents illegally entering and searching homes and illegally searching non-target individuals during raids.⁸ Under the Obama Administration, ICE has shifted away from these large-scale raids. However, deportations have increased, not decreased, during this government. In 2010, 392,862 people were deported, an increase of approximately 23,000 more deportations from 2008, the last year of the Bush Administration.⁹ There are currently several ICE programs to apprehend immigrants that work in conjunction with state and local law enforcement agencies, such as the Criminal Alien Program and Secure Communities that also present their own risks, particularly given the lack of oversight over the police.¹⁰ While the Secure Communities enforcement program has attempted to target undocumented individuals who have committed serious crimes or who are repeat violators of immigration laws it has been very controversial. According to the American Immigration Lawyers Association, “60 percent of

⁶ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Jorge Bustamante, on his mission to the United States of America, A/HRC/7/12/Add.2, March 5, 2008.

⁷ “Overview of Key Immigration Issues Facing the Immigrants’ Rights Movement,” National Immigration Law Center, November 2009. <http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/index.htm>

⁸ Bess Chiu, et. al. “Constitution on ICE: a Report on Immigration Home Raid Operations,” Cardozo Immigration Justice Clinic, 2009.

⁹ Preston, Julia, “Deportations from U.S. Hit Record High,” The New York Times, October 6, 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/07/us/07immig.html>

¹⁰ “Overview of Key Immigration Issues Facing the Immigrants’ Rights Movement,” National Immigration Law Center, November 2009. <http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/index.htm>

those deported under the program have never been convicted of a serious crime or any crime.”¹¹ The Obama Administration has recently altered its deportation policies after organized protests by Hispanic groups and immigration reform advocates. The new guidelines announced on August 18, 2011, focus the Department of Homeland Security’s resources on detaining and removing the highest-priority individuals—those who present a threat to public safety or national security – and they should reduce deportations of the elderly, minors, individuals who have been in the U.S. since childhood, veterans and others. It will be important to monitor in the coming months how this new discretion is applied in immigration courts and how and when the Department of Homeland Security will fully apply this new policy.

Although immigration in the United States has traditionally been an issue for federal legislation and enforcement, recently many states and localities have enacted their own harsh laws on immigration. The Arizona law SB1070, and similar initiatives being discussed in other states including Alabama, Georgia, Utah, and Indiana run the risk of institutionalizing racial profiling and abuse of authority by police officers. The Alabama law is one of the worst, and it includes a provision to penalize people who knowingly harbor or give transport to illegal immigrants, and another that obliges schools to check the immigration status of students, and report to authorities those who are undocumented. Most of these laws have been stopped by Federal judges and are currently being disputed.

Mexico

Mexico is a country of origin, transit, and destination for migrants. It is estimated that every year over 170,000 Central American migrants travel through Mexico on their way to the United States. Thousands of Central Americans, mainly Guatemalans, also work in the coffee fields and tourist industry in Mexico’s southern states every year.

In 2005, Mexico’s National Immigration Institute (INAMI) became part of the country’s National Security Council, and over the past six years the Mexican government has adopted several measures to strengthen border controls along the Mexico-Guatemala-Belize border. In essence, Mexico serves as a preliminary hurdle to stem undocumented immigrants, particularly Central Americans, from getting to the United States. Given the geographic difficulties in patrolling this 600 mile border, the Mexican government has also established immigration check points throughout the country particularly along roads and the railway that many migrants use to transit Mexico. As a result of these checkpoints, many migrants opt to travel off the beaten path in isolated areas, making them more vulnerable to criminal groups. Their known presence on the railway also makes them easy targets for abuses including kidnapping, robbery, sexual assault, human trafficking, and murder.

On August 25, 2010, the bodies of 72 migrants from Central and South America were found massacred in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, Mexico. This massacre shocked Mexicans and the international community, and it shed light on an often hidden aspect of migration to the United States – the serious risks faced by migrants in transit in Mexico. While these migrants have long been subject to abuse by criminal groups as well as Mexican authorities, this situation has worsened in recent years due to the increasing presence and power of organized criminal groups operating in the regions used as transit routes for migrants. In 2009, Mexico’s National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) issued a special report on the kidnappings of

¹¹ “AILA Urges Timeout on the Secure Communities Program,” AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 11050364 (posted May. 3, 2011). <http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=35274>

migrants.¹² This report documents that from September 2008 until February 2009, 9,758 migrants were victims of kidnapping in Mexico; of these 9,194 migrants were affected by organized gangs. In a follow-up report issued in February 2011, the CNDH documents 11,333 migrants who were victims of kidnapping from April to September 2010. Both reports, as well as testimonies gathered by migrants' rights organizations in Mexico, point to the participation of a number of Mexican authorities in the kidnapping of migrants and the complicity between criminal groups and some state agents.¹³ According to a 2008 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Jorge Bustamante, on his visit to Mexico, “[t]ransnational migration continues to be a business in Mexico, largely operated by transnational gang networks involved in smuggling and trafficking in persons and drugs, with collaboration of the local, municipal, state and federal authorities... With the pervasiveness of corruption at all levels of government and the close relationship that many authorities have with gang networks, incidences of extortion, rape and assault of migrants continue.”¹⁴

In addition to migrants' risk of being kidnapped or subject to other abuses during their travels through Mexico, the way that INAMI agents conduct their operations to verify the legal status of migrants has also led to abuse. Amnesty International as well as several Mexican organizations and shelters working to protect the human rights of migrants have indicated that the established regulations for immigration agents or the Federal Police to carry out these checks are frequently ignored. As a result, migrants have suffered abuses including sexual assault, robbery, and physical injury at the hands of Mexican officials during these operations. Similarly, immigration agents frequently establish checkpoints along the transit corridor. When migrants see a checkpoint, they often jump off of the moving train to avoid being caught which has led to injuries, the loss of limbs, and even the death of migrants.¹⁵

In 2008, Mexico reformed its General Population Law so that violations of the immigration statute – such as illegally entering the country, falsifying documents, or overstaying one's visa – are no longer criminal offences; they are now considered administrative offenses punishable by fines and voluntary repatriation or deportation. Shortly after the massacre of the migrants in Tamaulipas, the government also announced its Comprehensive Strategy to Prevent and Combat the Kidnappings of Migrants of Mexico, and in May 2011, the Mexican Congress passed a landmark Migration Law, providing the basic framework for addressing migration issues in the country and separating migration issues from the General Population Law.

While these efforts are important, the CNDH's reports, as well as the July 2011 visit of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrant Workers, Felipe González, to Mexico, clearly show that migrants continue to suffer horrendous abuses in Mexico and suggest that the Mexican government has not done enough to fully address this problem. One year after the massacre of the 72 migrants, 82 people have been detained as suspects in the crime, but no one has been sentenced. The impunity that has prevailed for crimes against migrants in transit and the failure to address corruption effectively within Mexican government agencies has greatly increased the risks faced by migrants as they travel through the country.

¹² National Human Rights Commission, “Informe Especial de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos sobre los casos de secuestro en contra de migrantes”, 2009, www.cndh.org.mx/INFORMES/Especiales/infEspSecMigra.pdf.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Jorge Bustamante. Mission to Mexico (March 9-15, 2008), A/HRC/11/7/Add.2, March 24, 2009, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G09/125/76/PDF/G0912576.pdf?OpenElement>, para. 65.

¹⁵ “Sexto Informe Sobre la Situación de los Derechos Humanos de las Personas Migrantes en Tránsito por México,” Belén Posada del Migrante, Humandad Sin Fronteras, A.C., Frontera con Justicia, A.C., Saltillo, Coahuila, June 2010.

Policy Recommendations

Development Recommendations:

In the policy debates on migration, development must be a central part of the discussion. The single most important issue in the North America-Central America-Caribbean space is to bridge the development gap between the industrialized countries on the one hand and the developing countries on the other. The governments of Mexico and Central America need to increase their efforts to promote equitable development with economic growth in their countries in order to stem the flow of undocumented migrants to the United States. If the U.S. wants to reduce irregular immigration, then it must support the Mexican and Central American governments in implementing sustainable development strategies. While hometown associations, temporary workers programs, and matching funds can support economic and community development in their countries of origin, they are not a substitute for job creation and rural development programs that allow people to stay in their communities.

We make the following recommendations to the governments of the United States and Mexico. Because of the similarities in the economic models and free trade agreements for Mexico and Central America, we believe that the majority of these recommendations also apply to the Central American countries.

United States

1. The U.S. House of Representatives' Ways and Means Committee or the Senate Finance Committee on Trade should ask the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a comprehensive study of impact of NAFTA and DR-CAFTA on job creation, small agricultural producers, and small businesses in the rural and urban sectors in Mexico and Central America, and the resulting impact on outward migration. The report should include recommendations on reforming trade rules to support local development and small-scale agriculture in these countries.
2. The U.S. Congress should at a minimum reinstate U.S. foreign assistance programs to the region to FY2010 figures and prioritize funding for rural development strategies, including support for small-scale farmers to improve food production and marketing strategies, small scale agro-enterprises, and more access to credit and micro-finance opportunities. This support should include sustainable agricultural approaches that combine modern strategies and traditional knowledge. World Bank and academic studies have demonstrated that access to land contributes to poverty reduction, economic growth, and development, so assistance must include support for improving access to productive resources.
3. The U.S. Government should direct the U.S. executive directors of the international financial institutions to promote the funding of comprehensive development projects in communities with high incidences of out-migration.
4. The U.S. Government should promote and facilitate the options for investment of emigrants in infrastructure and social development projects in their communities of origin.
5. U.S. security cooperation for Mexico through the Merida Initiative and to Central America through the Central American Regional Security Initiative should increase funding of the Economic Support Fund account and incorporate additional support for job creation and violence prevention programs as a way to deter young people from migrating or entering into the drug trade.

Mexico

1. The government should conduct comprehensive studies of the impact of NAFTA on job creation and agricultural development in the rural and urban sectors. Based on this assessment, the Mexican government should reform trade rules that have negatively impacted small to medium agricultural producers and small to medium businesses, such as including “special safeguard mechanisms,” national content percentages within rules of origin and considering tariffs, quotas, voluntary exports restraints on select agricultural goods.
2. The government should invest in small to medium scale agricultural development and facilitate more access to credit for these producers, as well as small-to medium businesses, to stimulate job growth and fortify food security.

The United States and Mexico

The United States and Mexico should undertake a joint analysis on the perspectives of economic integration, demographics, and labor force education between the two countries and in the region as a whole. According to the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, 100% of the net increase in the labor force of the United States in 2010-2030 will come from immigration. The established goal of the Obama administration to duplicate U.S. exports in five years’ time cannot be met without the involvement of the other economies of the region, including Canada, Mexico, and the Central American and Caribbean countries in establishing a new productive platform. This means that human mobility and labor market complementarity are issues that cannot be addressed unilaterally by the receiving country but have to be considered in a concerted way, just like in the case of trade agreements.

Human Rights Recommendations

We urge the governments of the United States and Mexico, as well as the other countries in the region, to examine ways to overcome existing obstacles for the full and effective protection of the human rights of migrants, and to promote the effective application of relevant international norms and standards on the issue. Immigration policy in all of our countries must strike a balance among core principles of our democracy: preserving the safety and security of our nations and encouraging the economic strength of states, provinces, and communities. We encourage migrants themselves to be incorporated into the creation of public policies that will affect them, including, but not limited to, the discussions on immigration reform.

There are a multitude of steps and policies that the Mexican and U.S. governments should adopt to more fully guarantee the rights of migrants in their countries, including the recognition of migrants as full holders of universal human rights, regardless of their legal status.¹⁶ The following are just a snapshot of the types of policy changes that should be considered as both countries continue in discussions about reforming their immigration laws.

United States:

The U.S. government needs an immigration reform that decriminalizes workers who have left their country of origins as a result of unbalanced trade policies. We are encouraged by the efforts of the Obama Administration to change the United States immigration enforcement strategy and to focus its deportation efforts on immigrants who have committed serious crimes, and we hope these measures continue. Additional steps to be taken include:

¹⁶ Susan Gzesh, “Redefining forced migration using human rights,” *Migracion y Desarrollo*, 2008 First Semester.

- The U.S. Government should ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.
- The Obama Administration and Congress should formulate a national legislative and policy framework to protect the human rights of migrants.
- The Obama Administration should eliminate mandatory detention and return to a system that allows immigration judges to make case-by-case decisions about whether or not to detain an undocumented immigrant pending legal proceedings.
- The Obama Administration should adopt alternative programs for detention, particularly for unaccompanied minors and families with children.
- The Obama Administration should develop new and legally binding standards for detention centers.
- The Department of Homeland Security should require that ICE agents obtain judicial warrants before any home raid.

In further cooperation with Mexico, the United States should:

- Provide additional support and strengthen Mexico's efforts to professionalize, evaluate performance, and increase accountability of the police at the Federal, state, and municipal levels as well as agents from Mexico's National Immigration Institute.
- At the onset of the Merida Initiative, the U.S. Congress recognized the importance of ensuring that the Mexican government would respect human rights in the context of its security policies and it established that 15% of select accounts of U.S. assistance would not be released until the Secretary of State reported to Congress that the Government of Mexico was meeting four human rights requirements. One of these requirements is ensuring that civilian prosecutors and judicial authorities are investigating and prosecuting members of the federal police and military forces that have been credibly alleged to have committed violations of human rights. Congress should not release the conditioned Merida funds until all of the requirements have been met; this includes investigating and prosecuting Federal Police agents and members of the Mexican military responsible for human rights violations against migrants.

Mexico

- The Mexican government should commit to investigating and prosecuting government officials and third parties responsible for committing abuses against migrants in Mexico.
- The Mexican government should ensure that through the recently passed legal reforms and greater attention to victims, migrants who are victims of crimes can report them without being subject to migration proceedings and receive the protection that they need.
- The Mexican government should effectively implement the Integral Strategy to Prevent and Combat the Kidnappings of Migrants in Mexico, announced by the Ministry of the Interior in August 2010.
- The National Immigration Institute should provide oversight over all operations to verify a migrant's legal status to guarantee that they are carried in accordance with the law and take place under circumstances that prevent putting migrants at risk of accidents or excessive use of force by the authorities.
- The Mexican government should support the work of migrant shelters and organizations that defend migrants' human rights so that they may carry out their work safely and free from reprisals.
- The Mexican government should continue with its efforts to support the human rights of its citizens residing in the United States and encourage their socio-political participation in Mexico.
- The Mexican government should fully implement the forthcoming recommendations by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrant Workers, Felipe González, based on his July 2011 visit to Mexico.