



## Dialogue on Globalization

FACT SHEET

FES NEW YORK

January 2008

### New Powers for Global Change: Mexico at the UN

VALESKA HESSE

#### Introduction

As a founding member of the United Nations, Mexico's track record in multilateralism reaches back to 1945. However, the country became more proactive only after the mid 1990s when domestic changes also led to a transition of its foreign policy. Principles such as self-determination, the peaceful solution of conflicts, and the "Estrada-doctrine", which stipulates non-intervention in other countries' domestic affairs, have been re-evaluated. These changes were already reflected in the foreign policy under President Vicente Fox (2000-06). For instance, Mexico became a non-permanent member of the Security Council (SC) in 2002, it hosted a range of international meetings<sup>1</sup>, and it actively participated in multilateral initiatives that were designed to strengthen democracy and human rights. Emphasizing social rights, Mexico initiated and actively promoted the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol<sup>2</sup>. Since 2006, Fox's successor President Felipe Calderón is expected to follow this line as Mexico aspires again for a SC seat in 2009/10.

#### Mexico's Engagement in UN Reform

In 2004 Mexico initiated the "Group of Friends of the UN-Reform"<sup>3</sup>, which developed a set of propositions. Mexico emphasizes strengthening the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and a greater coherence of UN- Bodies and Organizations.

Although in the past Mexico tended to be more preoccupied with national sovereignty than with universal human rights, this attitude has changed since

the mid-1990s. For instance, the country was an active promoter and founding member of the new UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and was elected to the council for the period of 2006 to 2009.

Being the country with the highest rate of emigration world-wide, Mexico's perception is that its citizens are treated poorly in the United States, the country that receives most of them. While migration is a bilateral matter between these two neighbors Mexico partially tries to address the issue through the promotion of human rights of migrants on a multinational level.

#### UN Security Council

Mexico is not a permanent member of the SC nor does it aspire to become one. It favors a reform of the SC that leads to the inclusion of more non-permanent members for a longer period of time and with the possibility of reelection. It states that introducing the principle of reelection for non-permanent members would allow a more continuous presence in the SC of countries that are willing to play an active role in the international agenda and at the same time would guarantee their accountability and responsible behavior.

#### Financing for Development

Having been a key actor as the facilitator and the host of the conference on Financing for Development (FfD) in Monterrey in 2002, Mexico is actively involved in the FfD follow-up process. In particular, it promotes the implementation of the commitments made within the Monterrey-Consensus, as well as the building of new bridges and initiatives to enhance their impact on sustainable development. The Rio Group - with Mexico being one of its most proactive members - is a highly visible advocate on development issues and intensively engages in the preparation of the FfD follow-up conference due to take place in Doha, Qatar in late 2008.

<sup>1</sup> Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey (2002), WTO- Meeting, Cancun (2003), European Union - Latin America Summit, Guadalajara (2004).

<sup>2</sup> Adopted by the GA on 12/13/2006.

<sup>3</sup> Other countries are Algeria, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, Spain and Sweden. See [http://www.un.int/mexico/index\\_reform.htm](http://www.un.int/mexico/index_reform.htm)

**Table: Mexico at the UN**

<b>Date of accession:</b> Nov. 7, 1945
<b>Contribution to regular UN- Budget (2005):</b> \$ 33.5 million
<b>Contribution to peacekeeping (2006):</b> \$ 25 million
<b>SC member:</b> 1946, 1980/81, 2002/03, candidate for 2009/10
<b>Important positions:</b> Mr. Bernardo Sepulveda Amor (Judge ICJ 2005 -15), Mrs. María- Elena Medina Mora (Int. Board on Narcotic Control 2007-12), Elva G. Escobar (Legal and Technical Commission of Int. Seabed Authority 2007-11), Griselda Galicia García (Intergov. Committee for the Safeguarding of Cultural and Tangible Heritage, UNESCO)
<b>Membership in Commissions and Committees<sup>4</sup>:</b> Conference on Disarmament, Human Rights Council (2006-09), Executive Council UNESCO (2005-09), Social Development Commission (2007-10), Council Int. Seabed Authority, United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (2007 -12)
<b># of NGOs from Mexico registered with ECOSOC (consultative status or on roster):</b> 15 (out of 3051)
<b># of NGOs from Mexico registered with DPI:</b> 13 (out of 1664)
<b># of registered partnerships with Commission for Sustainable Development active in Mexico:</b> 26 (out of 334)
<b># of Mexican enterprises participating in Global Compact:</b> 273 (out of 3647)

Source: Several UN websites: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

### Disarmament and Terrorism

Disarmament and non-proliferation traditionally receive a lot of attention within Mexican foreign policy. Mexico became one of the first supporters of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)<sup>5</sup> and, as a member of the "New Agenda" Group<sup>6</sup>, promotes complete nuclear disarmament. As a country facing problems of violence and abuse of small arms, Mexico is an active promoter of international arms control and supports the Program of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The priority of human rights for the Mexican foreign policy agenda is also reflected by the country's contribution to the protection of human rights in the age of counterterrorism.<sup>7</sup> Mexico took the lead in elaborating a resolution about *the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism*<sup>8</sup>. Amongst other things, the

<sup>4</sup> For lack of space, this list is non-exhaustive.

<sup>5</sup> Mexico ratified the NPT on January 21st, 1969.

<sup>6</sup> This was formally established in 1998. Other members are Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden.

<sup>7</sup> Pellicer, Olga: México y la nueva agenda internacional, In: Jorge Eduardo Navarrete (Ed.): La Reconstrucción de la Política Exterior de México: Principios, Ámbitos, Acciones. Colección Prospectiva Global, 2006, p. 363.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution of the Commission of Human Rights 2003/68, adopted without voting.

resolution promoted the appointment of a special rapporteur who should gather information on abuses, make special recommendations, and report to the SC and GA, which came into effect in 2005.

### Climate Change

Mexico is a signatory state to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>9</sup> (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, which the country signed in 1998 and ratified in 2000. At the 2007 Bali Conference on Climate Change Mexico supported a post-2012 agreement that formulates a general objective for the reduction of emissions. Within this agreement Mexico also promoted voluntary, sector-wise goals for developing countries. While underlining the role of international cooperation in implementing those goals, Mexico rejects to invoke sanctions in cases of non-compliance.<sup>10</sup>

### Challenges Ahead

- At the UN Mexico forms part of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC). Unlike all other GRULAC members, Mexico, which joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1994, does not belong to the Group of 77 (G 77). Mexico sees this as a privileged, independent position and likes to think of itself as a mediator between industrialized and developing countries. As the problem of migration shows, however, this impartiality has its limitations.
- Despite its increased UN engagement, until today Mexico does not wield the influence that could be expected based on the country's territorial dimension, demography, international economic importance, geopolitical location, and relative weight on the regional level. One limitation is the country's constitution, which prohibits the military to operate outside of the Mexican territory or under a foreign command and therefore, Mexico's involvement in peacekeeping operations.
- Mexico's foreign policy continues to be determined by the relationship with the United States. Multilateralism and UN institutions are consciously developed further to balance and compensate for this close bilateral and somehow dependent relationship.

### Further Reading:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.sre.gob.mx>

Mexican Mission to the United Nations in New York: <http://www.un.int/mexico/>

<sup>9</sup> Signed by Mexico in 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Most of these points are to be found within the Bali-Action-Plan. See [http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop\\_13/application/pdf/cop\\_bali\\_action.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_13/application/pdf/cop_bali_action.pdf)