

Notes for an address at the session on

## The Social Agenda of North American Integration: Migration and Development

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Maureen O'Neil, President, International Development Research Centre

I am delighted to be here.

While I will share some numbers on migration/immigration to Canada and from Canada, I will spend more time on new knowledge development. This is my interpretation of development in the title – because it is new knowledge and new ways of using that knowledge (including in governing) which will generate the growth needed to increase the economic pie and, as well, identify means for more effectively sharing the resulting wealth.

According to a Canadian researcher, Richard Harris of Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, although there is uncertainty about just how knowledge diffuses, since much useful knowledge is non-codified and tacit, it is actually people-to-people communications that matter. Globalization has sped this up – and so the mobility of people is crucial to its spread – particularly highly qualified knowledge workers – like you. This research implies that the cocktails and dinner you are looking forward to will be more important than listening to us!

Some quick numbers: according to Canadian Immigration, about 50,000 Mexicans live in Canada permanently, 200,000 come as tourists every year (although I don't think they would be attracted by the article in the Mexicana Airlines in-flight magazine about Toronto – highlighted as a city of 'squat' buildings and an old-fashioned museum. Luckily the author chanced upon an excellent Mexican restaurant!) Last year, 2,830 Mexicans immigrated to Canada (2004 in U.S. – 173,664 immigrant visas to Mexicans). There is a very successful Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (almost 14,000 people currently using it). Mexico is the #1 source of foreign workers, and grew 9% for 2005-06.

Big News: Mexico is now a source of refugee claims – 4700 in first 7 months = now #1 – making the Windsor border point and airports very busy spots. Economic refugees: Mexico, China, Colombia. How to manage this fairly, humanely and without destroying Canada's image – hand-cuffing people coming off planes jars!

Five years ago remittances going back to Mexico from Canada totalled about \$80 million – obviously more today. Mexico is not a major sender of students – a long way behind China, U.S., France and India. Looking at the ‘NAFTA VISAS’, 63 professional occupations among those going to the U.S. 64,062 Canadians and 21,130 Mexicans. This Mexican number had stayed stable, Canadians dropped almost 30% in the last 5 years. Retirees – int. point.

So this is a quick tour of the numbers. But now I want to move on to ‘development’ – to the migration of ideas, which move around thanks to both money, and people, and the right institutions to make it happen. And ideas are essential for development.

I want to talk about a combination of Canadian dollars leveraging Mexican minds and money – through a Canadian institution – and the potential development benefits that this can produce for us all.

Some important aspects of this work now being carried out by Mexican researchers, frequently involving Mexican public institutions and sometimes private emerged as a result of commitments made at two Summits of the Americas.

Canada created the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas subsequent to the Quebec Summit which is an IDRC program. Its purpose was to explore how increased use of ICT’s – Internet, mobile phone platforms – could increase democracy, improve public sector functioning and reduce inequality. Mexico seized the opportunity and together with the Canadian School for the Public Service, pioneered (through the Ministry for the Public Service) an internet-based set of training programs to improve the capacity of public servants. It is viewed as a success.

There are discussions underway with Carlos Slim’s new foundation to support Mexico sharing what they have learned with other countries in the hemisphere. IDRC has funded the OAS to create a network that involves governments in the region in another important e-government application which, it is hoped, will increase efficiency and transparency – the inter-American e-procurement network in which Mexico is active. We are anticipating that this early investment will leverage about \$3 million additional resources through the multilateral investment fund (Mexico is one of the 6 members) of the IDB.

CIDE – A Mexican think tank is doing the research to develop cell-phone based platforms for use in extending earlier work on procurement – cell phone platforms will be much easier for small business which may not have the broad-band connection. (And doing work on de-regulation.)

FLACSO – Social Science teaching and research institution. Mexico is researching the labour requirements of the knowledge economy (a million-dollar investment for IDRC). This is a multi-pronged project on the knowledge economics leading an across-Latin American group, which includes, *inter alia*, analyses of private sector requirements, changes required to education, etc.

Education: Mexico has also been an active participant in the work on the Education Portal of ICA in which several countries put up their digitally available education materials for all to share.

IDRC has long been a partner in working on health and health/environment problems with Mexico. We were one of the first funders of the Institute for Public Health.

As required by NAFTA, Mexico has eliminated DDT use. IDRC-funded work with the Institute for Public Health helped this happen two years ahead of schedule and the 2 Mexican scientists involved received the Jorge Rosenkranz Award from Syntax.

IDRC supported an ambitious project that helped long-term air equality policies and programs in Mexico City (1998-2004), just a 10% reduction would mean a savings of \$900 million a year in health costs! This science underpins the government's long-term plan for air improvement. The small research investment resulted in a public, Mexican investment of \$25 billion.

Next year, Mexico will host a major meeting on health and the environment – Ecohealth, of probably about 500 researchers. This is a field that IDRC supported with Mexican and other researchers around the world have created. Again: Summit of Americas – Mar del Plata – Health and Environment ministers.

Similarly, whether in Trade Research networks, or analysing the best ways to decentralize health systems, or the issues of new business models in cultural industries, Canadian resources and Mexican scientists are doing work that will benefit people around the world. Mexican scientists will be a part of new work on adaptation to climate change hopefully beginning next year (joint UK & Canada).

Also with reference to environment – There are some fascinating cross-overs between migration and environment and a new research competition we are just launching – hopefully Mexican scientists will apply – will look at what happens to land abandoned by migrants – what are the environmental consequences of leaving it untended.

Just one last mention – both Canada and Mexico have been engaged with Haiti. Haitians have immigrated in large numbers to Canada. Now Canada is heavily engaged in helping that troubled country. The question of intervention in sovereign countries, when their people are at high risk, the doctrine Canada developed as 'Responsibility to Protect' has generated considerable discussion in Latin America: This question of public policy around intervention in sovereign states is being rethought. Mexican scholars are participating with counterparts from Argentina, Brazil and Chile, examining this issue from their perspectives with particular emphasis on Haiti.

I began by emphasizing the importance of mobility in building and sharing knowledge – IDRC's work shows this. Researchers in Mexico who know Canada through IDRC can be an incredibly important resource for all of us.