

TOWARDS A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - South America

Mexico and India have had 69 years of diplomatic relations based on mutual interest and understanding. In 2007, a Privileged Partnership was established between both countries and we are now working towards a Strategic Partnership. A new government began in Mexico last December and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was reappointed to a new term in May, setting the stage for a broader and deeper collaboration upon our shared democratic values.

As two ancient rivers that merge into one throughout time, Mexico and India have a common goal: social development and inclusion. To accomplish this, we are determined to promote trade and investment in priority sectors; improve market access, including for agricultural products; promote tourism; and foster cooperation in many areas, such as energy, science and technology. Our collaboration is also important to strengthen multilateralism and the rules-based international system, and to foster cooperation within mechanisms such as the G20.

This week we will hold senior official consultations. Mexico's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Julián Ventura, is in New Delhi heading a delegation that includes representatives of the private sector and academia. In this context, we will hold a dialogue with Indian partners on innovation and social development to set ambitious goals for the coming years.

As a result of our mutual economic strengths, and considering the regional and global importance of Mexico and India, we have achieved rapidly expanding trade and investment links between our two countries. Mexico has become India's top trading partner in Latin America and it is the top investor from the region in India, while India is now for the first time among Mexico's top 10 commercial partners. Our bilateral trade reached more than \$10 billion in 2018, four times what it was in 2009.

Tourism is also a growing sector that brings our two peoples together: we share the pride of being the heirs of ancient and rich civilisations, and our cultural partnerships give our ties depth and vision. In 2018, Mexico attracted 41 million international tourists, 6% more than the previous year. According to the WTO, Mexico is the sixth most-visited country in the world, and it is proud home to 35 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, a figure comparable to India's.

But what is most relevant is that, in 2018, Indians have been among the top 20 visitors to Mexico, and Indian tourism to Mexico is exceeding that of many European countries. Opportunities for Indian tourists visiting Mexico are endless, as they comprise adventure tourism, ancient archaeological sites, magical colonial towns, unforgettable gastronomy and much more. This has also been made possible by the wide variety of flights and airlines connecting both countries. More connectivity to facilitate leisure travel also enhances trade and business cooperation between our two countries.

The exchanges Mexico and India are undertaking this week represent an opportunity to strengthen this bilateral relationship, a time to continue the conversation about our common future, and a space to find local answers to global issues. Together we can quite literally reach out to the stars in the field of space cooperation. Together we can bring a social perspective to the world of technology and innovation. Together, finally, we can advance to shape the global agenda so that it benefits our communities, their future and well-being. No small challenge, but one that can be achieved with the firm solidarity between India and Mexico.

Federico Salas is Ambassador of Mexico to India

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