

OUR VOICE

The challenges currently faced by Mexico seem to be not only multiplying but also rapidly intensifying. These challenges have emerged from structural problems characterized by the absence of sustained economic growth, together with random actions indicating the lack of comprehensive planning for prioritizing attention to the population's needs associated with well-being, specifically dignified employment, education, health, food and housing. And now the upcoming electoral process is already unfolding, scheduled to culminate in the summer of 2012.

With this panorama the current issue of *Voices of Mexico* begins with an analysis of various political and economic aspects that are critical to understanding the particularities that will define this electoral process and its results, specifically security, political forces and international trade. The first aspect—security—looms at the center of national debate, and this is not only because it is the principal demand made by the Mexican people—most of whom consider the strategy followed by the current government to be counterproductive, given the incessant rise in the numbers of victims and levels of cruelty, as exemplified by the repeated discoveries of “narcocemeteries.” In addition, corruption and impunity have left institutions fragile and discredited, and this is particularly the case for those responsible for imparting justice. And furthermore, the country's international image has also been damaged. The numbers tell us that the last four years have brought over 30,000 deaths and 230,000 persons displaced by the war against organized crime, indicating that the Mexican penal system has ceased to fulfill its function. It is for this reason that the excellent article by Miguel Carbonell is a necessary reading.

It is important to remember that Mexico's democracy is a model yet to be completed, since we are about to mark only twelve years since the end of the official party system, with a national president outside the ranks of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) elected on two subsequent occasions. If we take into account that citizens consider the actions and results of those in government in line with their expectations, it is concerning, in the context of the consequences of the global economic crisis and their repercussions in Mexico, together with, of course, the complex situation of insecurity, to see the data illustrated by Pablo Cabañas, indicating that two thirds of our population believe that government decision-making is aimed at protecting the interests of the country's elite.

We thus believe it will be interesting for our readers to recognize in this article the complexity of the country's partisan actors—beginning with those on the left—who have opted for more pragmatic tendencies that, while distancing themselves from orthodox practices, leave them navigating in an ocean of contradictions, with personal ambitions and group interests particularly apparent.

Moving on to economic matters, this issue includes reflections on the current status of Mexico's foreign trade. Despite the fact that our economy has become one of the most open in the world, the benefits are far from being perceived by most Mexicans. Fausto Kubli points to the risk inherent in our country's extreme dependence on foreign trade with the United States—beyond the 30 markets with which Mexico has established trade links—since our economy is far from being productive. As long as our domestic market is not strengthened, and actions are not taken to persistently move toward entering the knowledge economy, the inequalities within our country will intensify, as will those in relation to our regional partners, Canada and the United States.

In addition, it is still necessary to study the consequences of fast-track trade agreements for Mexico, by assessing the pros and cons of deepening regional cooperation vis-à-vis international cooperation.

In our Special Section—coordinated by Rosío Vargas, a CISAN researcher—we invite our readers to an extensive review of the effects from the Macondo well oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Six experts on this topic debate the direct impacts for Mexico, the environment and bilateral relations between Great Britain and the United States. In a world in which the combination of climatic change and environmental devastation resulting from human actions has led to hundreds of thousands of deaths attributed to natural disasters in 2010 alone, the disappearance—caused by the oil spill—of sources of traditional work such as fishing means that numerous victims are placed into a vulnerable situation.

It is during this type of event that major corporate interests are exposed to global public opinion, demonstrating the need for stricter multilateral security measures, as well as for the accelerated development of clean energy alternatives.

Lastly, among the individuals contributing to this issue of *Voices of Mexico*, it is important to acknowledge those who have offered a thoughtful perspective on the wealth of cultural heritage preserved by the UNAM. With their focus on the great museographic settings housed within architectural treasures from our colonial period and to the 20th century, and including today's avant-gardism, as represented by the University Museum of Contemporary Art (*Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo*—MUAC), we are able, as members of the university community, to communicate to the world that we are proud of our origins, our history, our identity.

In short, as long as the spirit continues to speak for our race, as our university motto states, the people of Mexico will continue to fight unceasingly until the universal values focused on peace, justice and living with dignity prevail over the violence currently casting shadows over our land.

Silvia Núñez García
CISAN Director