

DOSSIER

# Social Dialogue: Transborder Human Development in the Arizona-Sonora Region



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de la Frontera  
Norte



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## INTRODUCTION

This document unveils an updated perspective on transborder development in the fields of health, education, economics, urban development, environment, security and human rights.

For this purpose a group of governmental and academic institutions organized the past 27th and 28th of May in the city of Nogales, Sonora, the Binational Colloquium on Transborder Human Development in the Sonora-Arizona Region (CBDHTSA), which presents the following:

- a) The colloquium is the result of a growing concern for identifying and understanding the human development conditions in the Sonora-Arizona region. The organization of the event began in 2009, with a clear objective of linking different institutions including: Government of the State of Sonora, Local Government of Nogales, Sonora, The College of the Northern Border, Municipal Institute of Research and Planning, University of Sonora, The College of Sonora, Center for Research in Nourishment and Development, Center of Higher Studies of the State of Sonora, University of Arizona, Arizona State University and the Arizona Sonora Commission.



- b) The contradictions inherent to the region were made present with the approval of SB-1070 (April 23), context in which some governmental organizations and citizen promoted the rupture of dialogue. The binational colloquium was designed as a forum to engage those stakeholders that suggest the renovation and construction of a collaborative dialogue.
- c) The urgent need for collaboration and cooperation in the Sonora-Arizona region is evident as dynamic social, economic, political, educational and industrial rigidities differentiate the area. The identification of these dynamics was the main concern of institutional and local organizations that participated in the transborder colloquium.
- d) The transborder area presents an exacerbation of bi-local concerns including: pollution of international waters, economic and industrial asymmetries, rupture of human rights, access to health care and environmental crisis. Understanding the aforementioned issues will contribute to the reconstruction of the dialogue and renewal of traditional ties in the region.



## IMMEDIATE RESULTS

Eighty-one participants were distributed in nineteen tables and grouped into five thematic areas. The Binational Colloquium on Transborder Human Development in the Sonora-Arizona Region (CBDHTSA) featured the presentation of international videos including: “389 Miles: Living the Sonora border” directed by Luis Carlos Davis (<http://www.389miles.com/index-esp.html>); Maquilapolis. City of factories directed by Vicky Funari and Sergio de la Peña (<http://www.maquilapolis.com>). In addition, 14 posters (concept maps), a photo exhibition (76 images) and the reconstruction of the social dialogue contributed to the understanding of the transnational space, which benefits the transborder community.

This dossier summarizes a series of original contributions with a multidisciplinary and comprehensive perspective of the different viewpoints that converge in the region. The perspectives of the North (United States), the South (Mexico) and the binational region (transmigrants and transit) build a triadic perspective, which challenges the understanding of what transborder means.

The intent is to specify some indicators and conclusions for designing transborder public policies. The following provides a series of analytical findings to understand the complexity of the Sonora-Arizona region, and calls for new lines of research that contribute to the discussion of the binational debate. The following conclusions are intended, mainly, for researchers, politicians, public servants, officials, academics and students of both countries.



## SECTION I

# TRANSBORDER REGION

### 1. An Invisible Transborder Economy

According to the Border of Governors Commission (2007), the northern border region as a single economy would be the 5th global economy, with a GDP of 3 billion USD, a population of 86 million, a GDP per capita of 17,410 USD and will possess one of the most competitive infrastructures at a global scale.

### 2. Common Problems, Differentiated Actions

The following characteristics identify the region including: limited water supply, extreme climates, the sharing of the flora and fauna, similar topography, competitive terrestrial communication and aerial infrastructure, complementary production in the services and manufacturing industry clusters. However, strategies to tackle the common problems are differentiated for multiple reasons including the economic ability of the United States, Mexico's historic stagnation and a confrontation perspective adopted by the northern border. In addition, to the aforementioned reasons, the convergence of different socio-political perceptions: 1) Southern border: criminalization or collaboration (American perspective); (2) Northern border: American dream or a region's development (Mexican perspective); (3) transborder region: symbiosis Mexico-United States-Mexico (the transmigrant perspective).

### 3. Spontaneous Transborder Collaborations

The native social relations in the region establish a series of spontaneous initiatives of institutions, non-governmental agencies and other social actors, which based their collaboration in common problems that go beyond legal decrees. The following cite some successful transborder initiatives:

- Border Environment Cooperation Commission (COCEF/BECC) (<http://www.cocef.org>).
- U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program (Border 2012).
- Consortium of Colleges and Universities of Border States.
- Institute of Mexicans Abroad (<http://www.ime.gob.mx/>).
- International Commission of Limits and Waters (CILA/IBWC).
- Association of Municipalities of the Northern Border of Mexico.

The aforementioned initiatives among others were built through dialogue with the recognition of differences and similarities.



## SECTION II

# BI-LOCAL DYNAMICS

### 1. Bi-local Transborder Initiatives

The bi-local initiatives should be communicated through public policies agendas “sterilized” to socio-political disruption. For example, the initiatives contained in the Sonora Arizona Commission (CSA) are eminently local and represent an accumulation of experience, which in 2010 marked 50 years of collaboration. The aforementioned initiatives symbolize relevant strategies, which are now paralyzed by the socio-political context. Stalled by a political decision and not by the initiative of the actors involved. Some other local initiatives that need to be highlighted are the following:



- a) Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.
- b) Binational Committee for the Compromise of Air Quality in Both Nogales.
- c) Sonora Manufacturing Initiative.
- d) Development of skills and formal education for indigenous communities and students of Sonora and Arizona.
- e) Curricular content of the health educational programs in Sonora and Arizona with the intent to analyze the opportunity of professional integration on both sides of the border.
- f) Environmental education programs for implementation in schools from kindergarten to university level.
- g) Access to primary health care for agricultural workers in fields of Cochise County.
- h) State of the pandemic in the State of Sonora and Arizona, binational strategies.
- i) Communication protocols during a public health emergency in the Sonora-Arizona region.
- j) Medical tourism and retirement assistance.
- k) Infrastructure in the Mariposa Port of Entry

## 2. Transborder Complementarities

The bi-localities, of complementary character, is comprised of fourteen bordering cities which represent a delineated bounded area: Tijuana-San Diego; Calexico-Mexicali; Nogales-Nogales; Douglas-Agua Prieta; Ciudad Juarez-El Paso; Presidio-Ojinaga; Del Rio-Ciudad Acuña, Piedras Negras-Eagle Pass; The two Laredos; McAllen-Reynosa and Matamoros-Brownsville. This transborder territory has a population of over 11.8 million inhabitants, which is expected to increase to 19.4 million by the year 2020. Therefore, cities will face complementary actions:

- a) Generate transborder information. Population growth has caused unplanned development, greater land-use demand, energy, road congestion, increase of waste generation and insufficient capacity in the treatment of waste water. This is linked to various environmental health diseases that inhabitants of the border suffer as a result of contaminated water and breathing problems, as well as potential niches from trade and industry, agribusiness and tourism.
- b) Content available in real time. In order to guarantee the use of the information collected, the following actions are critical: development of infrastructure inventories, production competitiveness, social skills and services. Joint design of intra-border plans, climate change diagnostic in the region, productive synergies in the tourism and health sectors and academic attention to immigrants.



It is critical to have inventory projects with a bi-local focus, such as action plans generated through the COCEF/BDAN agreements in the border region states:



- a) State inventories with a common base methodology (in final approval process).
- b) Forecasting with constant assumptions.
- c) Constant guide (INE) for methodological research and data sources (IPCC foundations).
- d) Guide of EPA to maintain inventories of the three American States (IPCC foundations); Or the agreements signed by the CSA: Cooperation Agreement in Agriculture between the Government of Sonora and Arizona (CSA-2005); Declaration of cooperation to establish the Sonora Climate Change Initiative (CSA-2005); Partnership agreement to promote the tourism industry in both states (CSA-2004); Partnership agreement to promote the services and products of software development (CSA-2004); Partnership agreement to establish the alliance to help small-businesses in the Sonora-Arizona region (CSA-2003); Partnership agreement to establish a program that promotes reading and literature among children and adolescents of both states (CSA-2002).

### 3. Institutional Integration

Actions generated within the local governments are expected to generate synergies between neighboring institutional organizations, thus, creating institutional integration. For example:



- a) Coordination with the Committee on Health for joint participation in the Binational Plan Against Pandemic Influenza in the Sonora-Arizona region (CSA, Plan of action 3, November 2008); Identify bottlenecks and recommend low-cost and high impact projects to reduce waiting times in the Mariposa-Nogales Port Entry (CS, Plan of action 5, June 2008); As a proposal of the Nogales, Arizona Mayor, Ignacio Barraza, a binational task force will be integrated to deal with floods in Both Nogales (CSA, Plan of action 2, November 2008).

## SECTION III

# ADVANCING THE ARIZONA-SONORA TRANSBORDER DIALOGUE

## Differences and Complementarities

### 1. Transborder Actions: Environment

- a) Advance the reactivation of existing binational organizations.
- b) Increase transborder cooperation and linkages through programs and institutions such as Border 2012/Frontera 2012 and the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC).

Examples of projects supported by these institutions include biofuels production, forest management, eolic energy, methane capture on farms and landfills, and storm-water drainage, to name just a few. These projects nurture the growth of a culture that promotes the protection and conservation of water and natural resources within the context of transborder social responsibility.

- c) Support the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information, as well as interaction with citizens, as a key piece contributing to the success of proposed solutions to environmental problems and for the evaluation of resource and refuse management plans on both sides of the border.
- d) To place solutions to concrete problems, such as finances, cost structure and operations, within a vision that embraces planning and an adaptive transborder focus, and also includes strategic aspects of the efficient management of water resources and solid wastes (mercury, sulfuric acid, used tires, etc.).



- e) Expand and reproduce experiences such as the transborder aquifer evaluation program, while assuring the incorporation of Mexican academics in such a way as to create an integrated database with homogeneous criteria.
- f) Compile information on successful programs throughout the world, focusing on those that were developed in regions with physical and social characteristics similar to those found in the Arizona-Sonora transborder region.
- g) Emphasize the importance of conservation and management of sources of water, especially vegetated and riparian areas which are of vital importance for the recharge of aquifers on both sides of the border.
- h) Determine the groundwater levels in the Sonoyta-Puerto Peñasco aquifer, explicitly defining the components of its equation of equilibrium and determining its potential and amounts of available water.
- i) Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to evaluate solid waste management plans on both sides of the border.
- j) Conduct shared research with a focus on interdisciplinary, transborder (Arizona-Sonora) water resource studies.
- k) Distribute information on the environmental, technical and economic benefits of composting toilets throughout the Arizona-Sonora region.
- l) Gradually eliminate the use of materials containing mercury in homes in Nogales, Arizona.
- m) Strengthen binational efforts focused on the elimination of mercury in hospitals by establishing strategies that facilitate the exchange of mercury-free technology.
- n) Broaden the acceptance of insulating materials, such as fibrous concrete or confib, by developing strategies that demonstrate its environmental, technical, and economic benefits to the public.

## 2. Transborder Actions: Education and Migrant Youth

- a) Generate just and equitable access to education (in Mexico and Arizona) for a mobile population which is marginalized by its socioeconomic condition and indeterminate legal status, but which most of all is vulnerable due to being children.
- b) Formulate a binational agenda proposing creative solutions to the problem of access to education for migrant youth in Arizona. For example, by creating greater opportunities for access to continuous, equitable, and quality education as found in some community organizations. The objective is for immigrants to advance their skills and knowledge while at the same time strengthening their character as individuals and citizens in a new social context.
- c) Support the creation of shared sociocultural capital through experiences that transcend the border, thereby creating a more integrated society in the region.
- d) Facilitate the registration process on both sides of the border so that migrant youth gain greater access to education at all levels. A review of the potential of creating a binational institution, following the example of IBWC/CILA in the management of shared water resources, to facilitate access to schools is proposed.
- e) Support literacy programs for migrants of all ages, which entails the incorporation of technology as well as the involvement of municipal governments.



### 3. Transborder Actions: Urban Development

- a) Rethink the residential architecture of urban development as it relates to the processes of social differentiation, segregation, and exclusion in new developments (fraccionamientos).
- b) Implement the use of geographic information systems (GIS) in the analysis of the physical environment in direct relation to perceptions, quality of life and demographic characteristics, to incorporate models of analysis that connect the relationship of humans and the space they inhabit.
- c) Manage citizen participation through the internal and external organization of residents as a means to defend space and to efficiently construct housing in order to increase their well-being.
- d) Take into account decisions, participation and community organization for the defense of space in areas devoted to tourism; as well as access and mobility for urban residents with regards to transportation and urban infrastructure including pedestrian zones.
- e) Conduct a diagnostic study of the saturation and/or expansion of industrial parks in relation to their impact on local inhabitants, especially in relation to how they adapt to the physical conditions of the space as well as their interactions with nature.
- f) Redefine land use as it relates to public spaces, focusing on the relationship between the perception of quality of life and the reality of daily life.



- g) Explain how people, groups and institutions collaborate in urban development, while considering the space they inhabit as the center of daily life.
- h) Emphasize the importance of preserving vegetated areas endangered by urban development. An analysis of a city should include the growth rate of its population as it relates to the surface area of an urban center.
- i) Develop a strategy for the use of areas undergoing population growth in population that considers the physical and social environment with the objective of creating identity and attachment within the urban community.
- j) In the case of the urban environment of Nogales, the following elements of analysis and intervention are suggested:

- i. Analyze space, its use, context, and connection to the needs of its inhabitants, taking into account services, housing, environment, and human relations, among others.
- ii. Improve quality of life with regard to urban mobility, taking into account modes of transport, areas of pedestrian use including sidewalks and crosswalks, the condition of roads and signs for automobiles, as well as access for handicapped persons.
- iii. Coordinate the environmental elements generated by urban administrative processes in order to deliver better integration of the physical, social, cultural, urban and demographic elements of the city.



#### 4. Transborder Actions: Economy and Regional Development

- a) Develop a database for micro, small and medium businesses on both sides of the border (MIPYME is the acronym in Spanish) as these businesses are the best indicators of sustained economic growth.
- b) Conduct a longitudinal study on the potential for generating exports and employment in the transborder region, focusing principally on micro, small and medium businesses in the sectors of food processing, agricultural industry and regional products.
- c) Develop strategies for the financing, modernization, management, evaluation, innovation, and entrepreneurship for micro, small and medium businesses in the region.
- d) Develop a transnational public policy agenda with the objective of supporting cooperation, collaboration and exchange among micro, small and medium businesses.
- e) Develop a business plan for micro, small and medium business oriented towards export from the onset.
- f) Increase awareness of and access to sources of financial support for micro, small and medium businesses (Secretariat of Economy, CONACYT), accompanied by support in the application process.
- g) Develop a regional resource of financial assistance on both sides of the border for micro, small and medium businesses that will provide continuous support from planning to roll out for these businesses.
- h) Bring the installation of a binational Business incubator in coordination with the Arizona Mexico Commission to the attention the Secretariat of Economy.
- i) Create a data bank for micro, small and medium businesses, conduct periodic visits, and provide space in the universities to build capacity in these businesses.



j) Conduct a study on informal employment on Mexico's northern border and how it relates to migration and remittances. Initial findings reveal that for workers in some sectors, moving from the informal to the formal sector does not represent an improvement in the quality of employment, especially for agricultural workers. In order to analyze these findings, new analytical perspectives are proposed to study unstructured microbusinesses, such as:

- The informal sale of traditional and commercial products as well as services from Sonora in/to Arizona, including cheese, coyotas, chorizo, machaca, medical and dental services, among others.
- An informal economic corridor composed of tiangueros (flea market proprietors), used cars, appliances, perfumes and clothing items.
- The integration of resources: human capital (transmigrants), environmental resources (water, airsheds), urban resources including infrastructure.

k) There is an urgent necessity to review the requirements to start up a micro, small or medium business due to the arrival of transnational companies and franchises that have taken market share away from traditional and family businesses. This has provoked an increase in underemployment and diminished the possibilities of finding dignified employment. This urgency requires a freer flow of information to micro, small and medium businesses, and that institutions of higher learning provide support to these entrepreneurs. In the case of Nogales, it is recommended to:

- Develop marketing materials for the City of Nogales that are systematic and constant, highlighting its unique characteristics and its situation on the border.
- Explore geostationary tourism options that take advantage of the unique topography of Nogales with respect to other border cities and the interior of Mexico. As a port of entry for international tourism, Nogales is in many cases the first experience in Mexico for many tourists.

- l) Recent outcomes of an ongoing study on poverty and human development among migrant families, from a perspective of social and productive complementarity between Arizona and Sonora, reveal a circular flow of migrants which has grown in recent years in spite of an increase of legislation and enforcement on the part of the United States to stem this flow. This phenomenon has led to an increase in the number of attempts to cross the border as well as a shift in the points of entry and routes utilized by migrants.
- m) The nature of poverty on the Arizona-Sonora border requires development of common metrics to be utilized by academics and agencies in both the US and Mexico.

• Nogales possesses great potential for tourism, however an objective analysis, free of sociopolitical perspectives, should be conducted by institutions of higher learning, in conjunction with other organizations. As these initiatives often fall by the wayside in the short term, the involvement of institutions of higher learning is imperative to assure that these studies are concluded.

• With regard to employment and quality of life for the working class in Nogales, the processes that are impacting the Municipality at present, and over the past decade, were mentioned. They are greater population growth coupled with job creation, specifically growth of average incomes and employment in the manufacturing sector. It should be emphasized that Nogales ranks second in the State of Sonora with regards to job creation and population. However, quality of life and quality of employment have not increased accordingly in the city. This fact raises the following issues for analysis: a growing number of working adults without social security; a greater number of jobs without benefits or providing only the minimum benefits required by Federal Labor Law (Ley Federal de Trabajo); and a very limited urban infrastructure.

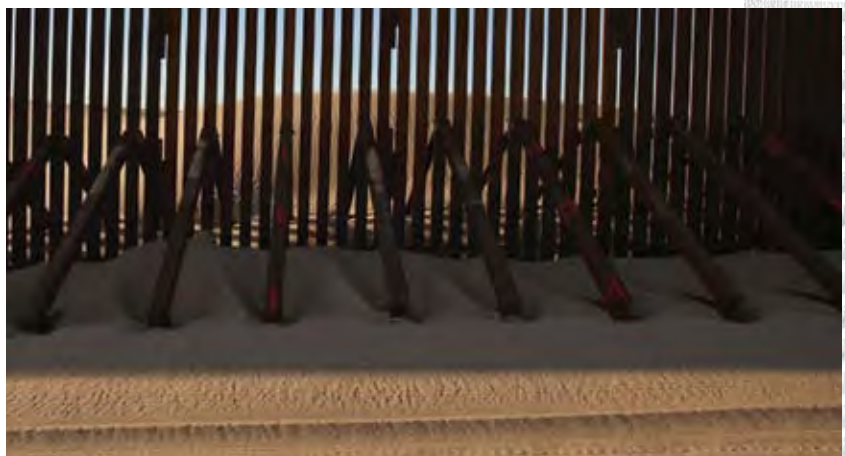
## 5. Transborder Actions: Human Rights and Public Security

- a) To design a plan adequately addressing the needs of migrant minors by optimizing the legal resources available through the Inter-institutional Program for Prevention and Assistance to Border Youth (Programa interinstitucional de prevención y atención a menores fronterizos-PIPAMF as abbreviated in Spanish) in the states of Baja California and Sonora. While PIPAMF does present some procedural deficiencies and prevention is not efficient due to a lack of specific programs, nevertheless it does represent a program that brings together the combined resources of a number of organizations (Secretaría de Gobernación, DIF, Defensa del Menor). PIPAMF also represents a transborder legal and judicial collaboration that could be utilized by initiatives put forth by the Border Governors Conferences or the Border Mayors Conferences among other programs, and by recuperating programs that have already been implemented. Examples follow: 1) To determine the feasibility of completing and publishing a “Bench Book” (Manual Práctico) or procedural guide for judges and litigating attorneys from Arizona and Sonora involved in transborder cases, an outline of which was developed in the 1990’s. (AMC; Action Item 2, June 2008); 2) To organize a meeting in Nogales, Sonora convening municipal authorities, the General Office for International Migrant Assistance (Dirección General de Atención al Migrante Internacional) and the Regional Subdelegation of the Migratory



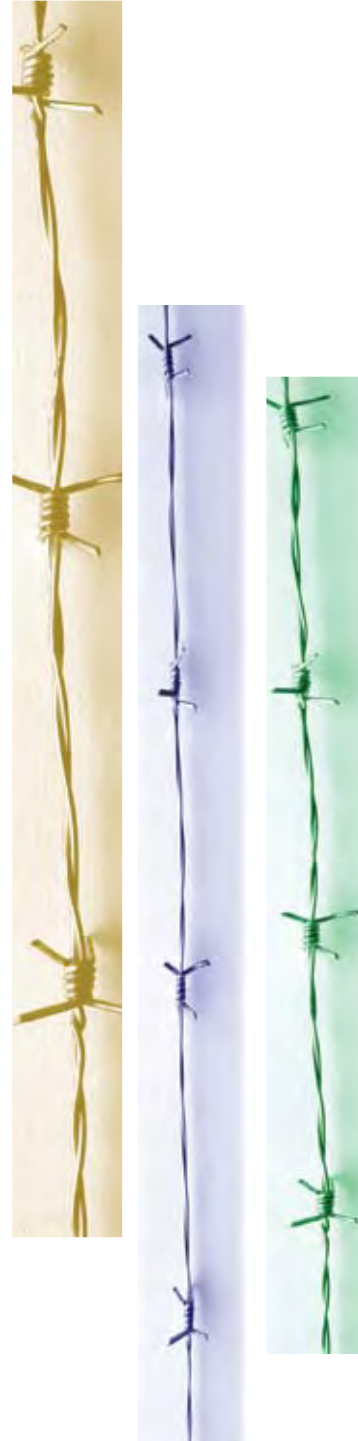
Center (la Subdelegación Regional del Centro Migratorio) to align criteria and efforts (AMC; Action Item 1, May 2008).

- b) To guarantee constitutional oversight on both sides of the border, by generating binational agreements of recognition and/or binational complementarity of the law of protection and support of migrants. The Essentials part of fundamental human rights is the necessity of their equal application, as the recognition of these rights, either through international treaties or constitutions, requires legal mechanisms to make them effective. For example, the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States affords the same fundamental rights for all persons found in that country.
- c) To renovate transborder dialogue through the organization of a forum in Ambos Nogales (Arizona and Sonora) with the objective of understanding and analyzing border security programs as well as developing an integral transborder security strategy.



## 6. Transborder Actions with an Emphasis on Health

- a) Health and nutrition are topics central to transborder relations, and have been widely developed by binational initiatives such as the Bilateral Agenda of the Healthy Border Program 2010 developed by the Border Health Commission, the objective of which is to promote health and prevent disease (2001). The Healthy Border program represents an initiative driven by a number of organizations, including the Indicators Program in Mexico and Healthy People 2010 and Healthy Gente from the United States. The structure of the Bilateral Agenda of the Healthy Border Program is composed of 20 health related goals contained in 11 areas of focus (please review the 2010 report here [http://www.border-health.org/files/res\\_819.pdf](http://www.border-health.org/files/res_819.pdf)).
- b) It is important to expand the network of researchers, students, NGO's, and institutions that share interests, modes of service, best practices, as well as materials, which would allow for the replication or adaptation of successful programs throughout the region. Integrating a network of researchers in virtual spaces, as through the Border Health Commission (<http://www.border-health.org/index.php>), the New Mexico Office of Border Health (<http://www.nmborderhealth.org/index.shtml>) or the EPA's portals (<http://www.epa.gov/espanol/saludhispana/asma.htm>), for example, is also a priority.



## 7. Strengthening the Transborder Social Dialogue

In spite of constant threats to the stability of the border region, the will to engage in a permanent dialogue, through governmental as well as private channels, is built daily by the various social actors that interact in the region. The agreement to coexist in harmony in accordance with the “good neighbor” policy will redound in a better quality of life for those who live and pass through the border region.

The challenge lies before us, to fortify the social dialogue already in existence, following the example of more than 50 years of the Arizona Mexico Commission, through a unique consensus which is the result of spontaneous collaboration among the various regional actors already mentioned.

The outcomes of the Binational Colloquium are eloquent and they establish a paragon to follow for the development of public policy bolstered by the consensus of academics and experts who participated in the inaugural event. The community of Sonora and Arizona, which has collaborated in an exemplary manner in the construction of dialogue for more than 50 years through the Arizona-Mexico Commission, gains an ally in the continued, objective reflection upon the development of the region.

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