

Innovating Together: A New Chapter in Mexico-Asia Pacific Cooperation

Innovando juntos: un nuevo capítulo en la cooperación entre México y Asia-Pacífico

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Abstract

The Asia-Pacific region is a priority for Mexico resulting from the political and economic ties that unite us and the size of its market. This article details the policy and international cooperation actions promoted by the Government of Mexico, in which AMEXCID has played a central role by strengthening the relationship with Asia-Pacific strategic countries. In particular, it seeks to delve into some of the strategic initiatives with India, Japan and Republic of Korea. On the other hand, it develops a recapitulation of Mexico's presence in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), which includes the most relevant countries in this region.

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Resumen

La región de Asia-Pacífico es prioritaria para México por los vínculos políticos y económicos que nos unen y el tamaño de su mercado. En este artículo se detallan la política y las acciones de cooperación internacional que ha impulsado el Gobierno de México, en las cuales la Amexcid ha tenido un papel central para fortalecer la relación con países estratégicos de Asia-Pacífico. En particular, se busca ahondar en algunas de las iniciativas estratégicas con India, Japón y República de Corea. De igual forma, se hace una recapitulación de la presencia de México en el Foro de Cooperación Económica de Asia Pacífico (APEC), que contiene a los países más relevantes de esta región.

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Keywords

International cooperation, scientific and technological cooperation, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, APEC Summit

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Palabras clave

Cooperación internacional, cooperación científica y tecnológica, India, Japón, República de Corea, Cumbre del APEC

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The Asia-Pacific region is home to some of the most dynamic economies on the planet, with the highest growth rates and enormous expansion potential. In addition, its companies are the source of strategic investments for Mexico in key sectors, such as automotive, electronics, energy, infrastructure and tourism. Due to its high levels of trade and investment, the region is recognized as a source of innovation, science and technology, as well as a source of cultural richness. All these strengths allow for a great cooperation potential in its bilateral relationship with Mexico, including all of its areas: economic, scientific, technical, cultural and educational.

To understand the dimension and importance of the bilateral relationship between Mexico and Asia-Pacific, we may refer to economic data (with information from the Bank of Mexico, the Ministry of Economy and the International Monetary Fund). Between 2018 and 2022, the country's trade with the region grew more rapidly (31%) than global trade (29%). Some countries have even seen growth significantly above the region's average, such as China, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Viet Nam, among others. This is a positive thing for Mexico, as half of its 10 main trading partners are located in this region: China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia and India.

During the administration of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the relationship with this region has played a leading role in the

country's foreign policy. Since December 2018, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Japanese Foreign Ministers Toshimitsu Motegi and Yoshimasa Hayashi, and Republic of Korea Chancellor, Park Jin, have visited the country.

In addition, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon, made 4 visits to the region and held 19 meetings in multilateral forums, 20 mechanisms for political consultations and a binational commission (India).

Chancellor Alicia Bárcena Ibarra traveled to China and the Republic of Korea in the first six months of her administration, as well as to San Francisco to participate, along with President López Obrador, in the Asia-Pacific Economic Leaders Week.

This proves that the Asia-Pacific region is a priority for Mexico in regard of the political and economic ties that unite us and the size of its market. However, the relationship has much more to offer, and since 2018, the Government of Mexico has promoted cooperation in its different modalities (bilateral, triangular and multilateral).

This vision aims to introduce a greater social content, with equality and inclusive development being included in the dialogue agendas, seeking to identify new collaboration mechanisms that promote the well-being of all people.

In this sense, strategic partnerships were created or strengthened with China, Japan, Republic of Korea and a privileged partnership with India. Similarly, our country maintains mechanisms for public consultation, as well as technical, economic and academic cooperation, with most of the countries of the region. The Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) has played a central role in this expansion of cooperation in the current six-year period.

This article details the expansion of the Mexican Government's international cooperation with Asia-Pacific, which AMEXCID has helped to promote. In particular, it seeks to delve into some of the strategic initiatives with India, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Finally, in this article a recapitulation is made of Mexico's presence in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), which includes the most relevant countries in the region.

Expansion of international cooperation with Asia-Pacific

AMEXCID is the Federal Government entity responsible for coordinating Mexico's international cooperation in regard of its dual role of offering and receiving cooperation. To that end, the Agency has sought to promote cooperation schemes of mutual interest that, in addition, aim to increase the well-being of the population in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Programme for International Development Cooperation (PROCID) is the document that establishes the priorities, planning and implementation of international cooperation actions, in accordance with the National Development Plan (2019-2024). Among its priorities is the strengthening of cooperation with Africa, the Middle East and Asia-Pacific aimed at promoting sustainable human development.

Every year, the Directorate of General Planning and Evaluation at AMEXCID systematizes the priority issues of international cooperation that will promote the Representations of Mexico Abroad (RMA). In the latest systematization exercise, the Asia-Pacific RMA reported on 121 priority themes they worked on during 2023, or will start in 2024. International cooperation actions driven by the RMAs contribute to meeting the priority strategies set out in PROCID and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Some of the cooperation activities of the RMAs in the region are outlined below, in the areas of cooperation in science, technology and innovation; aerospace cooperation; education; environment; disaster prevention, and food security.

Cooperation in science, technology and innovation

The Embassy of Mexico in China reported collaboration in the development of juncao grass technology, with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of the State of Sinaloa, and the University of Agriculture and Forestry of Fujian, on February 23, 2023. A demonstration center is expected to open in Mexico City, in the Xochimilco area, setting a milestone as the first transfer of this technology to a Latin American country.

As for the Embassy of Mexico in Japan, it shared information about the Nikkei Fellows Program and the Japan-Mexico Partnership Program.

Thanks to this last program, a Biosafety Level 3 laboratory was installed in the “Dr. Hideyo Noguchi” Regional Research Center of the Autonomous University of Yucatan.

The Embassy of Mexico in Indonesia also reported on its cooperation process with our country. This embassy presented the Technical and Scientific Cooperation Agreement on Agriculture between the National Institute for Forestry, Agricultural and Livestock Research (INIFAP) and the Indonesian Agency for Agricultural Research and Development.

Aerospace cooperation

In that respect, the Embassy of Mexico in the Republic of Korea highlighted the participation of the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI) in the development of the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency (ALCE) as a technical adviser.

The Embassy of Mexico in the Philippines reported on aerospace collaboration between the Mexican Space Agency and the Philippine Space Agency.

The Embassy of Mexico in Thailand conveyed the interest of this nation in acquiring knowledge about the Mexican experience in the training of human resources for aerospace technology.

The Embassy of Mexico in Australia reported the accompaniment to a project between the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) and Geoscience Australia for the development of the Geospatial Data Cube tool for the management and analysis of geospatial data.

Educational cooperation

The Mexican Embassy in China mentioned the bilateral Mexico-China scholarship program and the opening of a Confucius Institute at the University of Veracruz. As for the Embassy of Mexico in the Republic of Korea, it highlighted the dialogue between the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) and AMEXCID for the possible establishment of a KAIST campus in Mexico. In turn, the Embassy of Mexico in Japan presented several educational programs: including visits to/from Japanese schools, the Sakura Science High School Pro-

gram (SSHP), the Human Resources Training Program at the Mexico-Japan Global Strategic Partnership, and scholarships in technical studies in fishing and ocean exploitation for young people from coastal communities in the Gulf of California.

Environmental cooperation

The Embassy of Mexico in Japan described projects related to the fight against sargassum on the Mexican Caribbean coast in Quintana Roo, a circular economy project for the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and the construction of artificial reefs using the Shell Nurse Japanese technology in the Gulf of California.

The Embassy of Mexico in the Republic of Korea reported on a triangular cooperation project with El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala for forest landscape restoration.

Cooperation in disaster prevention

The Embassy of Mexico in China reported on cooperation in seismic risk reduction between the Chinese Seismography Administration and the National Center for Disaster Prevention.

On another note, the Embassy of Mexico in Japan presented the project to strengthen the Disaster Risk Reduction Governance in Mexico, which aims at training human resources, the development of local risk reduction plans and the development of risk assessment sheets. It also reported on the project for the Strengthening of Disaster Risk Management from Earthquakes in the Water System of Mexico City within the framework of the cooperation between Mexico City and Nagoya, Japan.

Cooperation for food security

The Embassy of Mexico in the Republic of Korea presented the capacity-building program for the management of agricultural, livestock and fisheries products safety in Latin America and the Caribbean. The program was attended by a National Service of Health, Safety and Food Quality (SENASICA) official in its first edition, held in Seoul from 1 to 10 October 2023.

Cooperation with India

India is Mexico's tenth trading partner with a trade volume of USD 114 billion, almost doubling since 2020, even in absence of a formal trade agreement. Similarly, this country is the largest producer of vaccines and generic drugs, so the Government of Mexico chose to strengthen bilateral scientific cooperation to address the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic and promote the recovery of the health sector.

With the purpose of strengthening the health sector, former Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon visited India on two occasions, accompanied by a delegation of officials from the Federal Commission for Protection against Health Risks (COFEPRIS), the Biological and Reagent Laboratories of Mexico (BIRMEX), and the Institute of Health for Wellness (INSABI), as well as scientists from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN), the Center for Research and Advanced Studies of IPN (CINVESTAV), and entrepreneurs from laboratories and technological startups. The role of AMEXCID during these visits was to consolidate bilateral cooperation schemes from which both our country and Asia would benefit.

As a result of these visits, INSABI acquired more than 100 million units of drugs from Indian companies. More than thirty of these companies participated and, thanks to the collaboration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE), we managed to increase competitiveness in the marketing of certain drugs, thus reducing prices in the Mexican market. COFEPRIS also signed an agreement with its Indian counterpart, the Central Organization for Drug Standards Control, with the aim of strengthening the exchange of information on regulatory and administrative aspects related to health.

In the area of technical cooperation, AMEXCID entered into an agreement with the Indian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research to support collaborative research projects in sectors such as aerospace, lithium, hydrogen, biotechnology and healthcare. The Agency also supported BIRMEX, which is responsible for manufacturing and marketing vaccines in Mexico, in the negotiation of a technology transfer agreement with Cipla, India's third-largest pharmaceutical company. This agreement allows a technology import from India, in order to manufacture oncological and antiretroviral drugs, thus ensuring long-term supply.

In addition, there were visits to the laboratories of the three main vaccine companies in India: Serum Institute of India, Biological E and Bharat Biotech, seeking to formalize agreements to produce vaccines against rotavirus and human papillomavirus in Mexico. The latter affects approximately 70% of the Mexican population and is the main cause of cervical cancer,¹ making it a priority in the improvement of women's well-being.

However, the most important achievement in terms of cooperation with India was the signing of the collaboration agreement between the National Institute of Medical Sciences and Nutrition "Salvador Zubirán" (INCMNSZ), the IPN and the Indian companies to transfer CAR-T cell therapy technology to Mexico. Chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy (CAR-T) is used against blood cancers such as leukemias and myelomas. In Mexico, cancer is the third leading cause of death among men and women, while leukemia is the most common cancer in children and we rank second globally in infant mortality related to this disease.²

In the United States, there are six types of CAR-T therapies commercially available and approved by regulatory authorities. However, the challenge lies in the high cost of these treatments, close to USD 500 billion, which makes them inaccessible to the majority of the population. The main advantage of ImmunoACT therapy lies in its economic strategy, inspired by the model of other leading Indian pharmaceutical companies, which consists in betting on volume and offering affordable prices to achieve significant market share.

Work is currently under way to conduct the first clinical trial with Mexican patients. To achieve this, it was agreed to finance the first phase as an international development cooperation project run by AMEXCID. By 2024, and beyond, there is a project to establish in Mexico a specialized laboratory locally producing the necessary supplies for therapy, with the goal

¹ ICO/IARC Information Centre on HPV and Cancer (HPV Information Centre), *Human Papillomavirus and Related Diseases in Mexico*, Barcelona, HPV Information Centre, 2023, at <https://hpvcentre.net/statistics/reports/MEX.pdf?t=1562771716751> (date of access: December 12, 2023).

² INEGI, "Estadísticas de Defunciones Registradas (EDR) 2022," press release no. 644/23, October 31, 2023, at <https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/saladeprensa/boletines/2023/EDR/EDR2022-Dft.pdf> (date of access: December 12, 2023).

that health centers may provide these treatments at an accessible level for the Mexican population.

Cooperation with the Japan Society Science and Technology Forum

In 2003, the Science and Technology in Society Forum (STS Forum) was created with the aim of promoting scientific and business innovation. Since then, annual meetings have been held in Kyoto, Japan, as well as regional meetings in the United States, Europe, India, Latin America and the Caribbean. The STS Forum serves as a meeting place between scientists and world leaders in the fields of politics, business and academia, with the aim of building collaboration networks for the advancement of science and technology globally. On the wake of these two decades, the Forum has been considered a global reference for scientific and innovation diplomacy.

Since 2006, the Government of Mexico has maintained a close relationship with the Forum, seeking greater Mexican participation to attract scientific innovative visions in the country. In 2021, the country joined the STS Forum as a distinguished board member. The following year, six Mexican scientists participated as speakers in the delegation led by AMEXCID.

Former Chancellor Marcelo Ebrard, together with founder Koji Omi, considered the importance of establishing a regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean. Although the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the implementation of this conference, it was finally held in 2021 in a hybrid format with headquarters in Mexico City and Tokyo. The event featured six thematic panels, where various issues of regional importance were discussed, such as scientific and technological diplomacy in international cooperation, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, technology for health, innovation ecosystems, and science and technology for the transformation of reality.

In March 2023, the first face-to-face meeting of the STS Forum's Regional High Level Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean was held at the SRE facilities in Mexico City. During this meeting, the challenges facing the region were discussed and, specifically, there were coordinated

sessions on health, electric mobility, climate change adaptation, resilient cities and financial inclusion.

During the event, former Chancellor Marcelo Ebrard highlighted the importance of Mexico's technological and innovative development in addressing future challenges. In addition, the president of the STS Forum, Hiroshi Komiyama, the president of the América Móvil/Telmex Group, Carlos Slim Domit, the executive vice president of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Mio Kawada, the Nobel Peace Prize 2007, Edmundo de Alba Alcaraz, participated in the inauguration, with, as presenter, the Director-General of Cooperation Policy of the AMEXCID, Javier Dávila Torres. In his presentation, the former Foreign Minister stressed in his that "If, in Latin America, we cannot develop an adequate scientific base and networks to develop vaccines or treatments, for example, against COVID-19 or other future risks, we are going to be left behind, we are not going to have the technology that others develop."³

Within the framework of the Conference, the "Exhibition of Innovation and Latin American Patents" was also inaugurated, with the aim of encouraging a dialogue between attendees about technology and science for the benefit of all. In this exhibition, we also sought to promote the work on scientific and technological patents in our country, in order to increase the number of registrations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Among the exhibitors were UNAM, INCMNSZ, the UNAM Chemistry Institute, the Center for Engineering and Industrial Development (CIDESI), Dereum, CINVESTAV and the Embassy of Switzerland in Mexico, OCTOPY, OTT NETWORK, Eternity, Nutrix, Eternity, Rea Diagnostics SA and Leading House for the Latin American Region. The University of St. Gallen, the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon (UANL), ITESO, Morelos Albert Einstein University (UAE), the University of Berlin, the Chemical Society of Mexico and the Consortium of Innovative Scientists in Health, among many others, also participated.

³ SRE, "Foreign Secretary Ebrard Brings Together over 600 Scientists, Academics, and Business Leaders to Discuss Development, Innovation in Mexico," press release no. 109, March 15, 2023, at <https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/foreign-secretary-ebard-brings-together-over-600-scientists-academics-and-business-leaders-to-discuss-development-innovation-in-mexico> (date of access: December 12, 2023).

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea is Mexico's third-largest trading partner worldwide and second largest in Asia-Pacific. The relationship with Korea is characterized by shared visions and strong economic and trade links, with exports of USD 7.376 billion (1.28%) and imports of USD 22.489 billion (3.72%). Its foreign direct investment in Mexico has reached USD 10.170 billion between 1999 and 2023, especially the automotive, electrical, technological, research and scientific development sectors.

In July 2022, a Mexican delegation led by Foreign Minister Alicia Bárcena, which included government officials, leaders of educational institutions and entrepreneurs visited the Republic of Korea to commemorate the 60th anniversary of bilateral relations. During the visit, high-level meetings were held with Korean dignitaries and companies and the delegation participated in the 2022 Korea-Latin America and Caribbean Future Cooperation Forum.

As a result, the AMEXCID has promoted agreements and collaboration in areas such as the pharmaceutical industry, technology, infrastructure and the environment. Specifically, an agreement was reached with the Korean Pharmaceutical and BioPharma Manufacturers Association (KPBMA) to send lists of drugs and requirements to participate in INSABI tenders, which aroused the interest of Korean companies in approximately 35 products.

On the other hand, in May 2023, during a visit of Foreign Minister Park Jin to Mexico, the commitment to strengthen the Strategic Partnership for Mutual Prosperity was reaffirmed, focusing on trade, technical and scientific cooperation and participation in international forums. In addition, in the pharmaceutical field, specific meetings were held to address issues related to the distribution and specific needs of medicines in Mexico.

Standing out is the Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP) of the Republic of Korea, which is coordinated by AMEXCID. Two projects were successfully completed within this program. The first one of them was the Strategic Accompaniment to contribute to the transformation of the Public Procurement System of the Federal Government 2018-2024, which was carried out by the Chief Administrative Office of the Ministry of Finance

and Public Credit. The second project carried out and fully completed was the Wastewater Management for the conservation of protected natural areas in Mexico.

On 15 October 2021, several Mexican institutions submitted for implementation 12 cooperation proposals to the Government of the Republic of Korea, following a favorable evaluation under KSP-23-24. The initiatives promoted cover topics such as: energy policy in the perspective of Mexico's energy reform; road and rail connectivity policies; wastewater management; climate change adaptation; sustainable forest policies; and technology policies.

On the other hand, in December 2023, Chancellor Bárcena made a working tour to the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea, with the objective of managing the acquisition of packages of appliances and essential items to help families affected by Hurricane *Otis* in Guerrero, as well as strengthening bilateral political dialogue. In Korea, meetings were held with high-level officials, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and representatives of the business community and the Mexican community in that country.

APEC Economic Leaders Week 2023

APEC Economic Leaders Week was convened in San Francisco, California, November 12-17, 2023. During this event, AMEXCID coordinated the participation of a high-level Mexican delegation.

President López Obrador participated in the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting, chaired by U.S. President Joseph Biden; the Minister of Finance and Public Credit, Rogelio Ramírez de la O, participated in the Finance Ministers Meeting, chaired by the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, Janet Yellen; and Chancellor Alicia Bárcena participated in the APEC Ministerial Meeting, co-chaired by Secretary Anthony Blinken and U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai.

APEC is the largest global trans-regional economic forum. It brings together 21 economies, representing 40% of the world's population, half of global trade and more than 60% of world GDP. For Mexico, trade with APEC represents 86% of the country's total trade; 7 of Mexico's top 10 trading

partners belong to APEC.⁴ During 2022, APEC countries invested nearly USD 336 billion in Mexico, representing 61% of foreign direct investment received in Mexico.

During 2023, the United States assumed the chairmanship of APEC under the slogan: “Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All.” The host economy worked with Forum members to support sustainability, through a focus on a fair energy transition, building a digital region by advancing digital skills and connectivity, and promoting resilience and inclusion, facing the moment in terms of trade and investment, gender equity, food security, anti-corruption, supply chains and support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

During her participation in the 34th APEC Ministerial Meeting, Chancellor Bárcena underlined Mexico’s commitment to reducing inequalities within and among our economies by calling for a rules-based multilateral trading system. In addition, the importance of bridging the gaps between Asia-Pacific economies and the Americas through the Forum’s economic integration and resilience opportunities was mentioned, as well as making trade more inclusive for women. Similarly, the issue of MSMEs and the promotion of investment in public infrastructure in the most marginalized areas of the country was brought up.

Reference was also made to the need to strengthen Mexico’s connectivity and trade with the region, highlighting opportunities for the Tehuantepec Isthmus Project to connect the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, so reducing freight time. Finally, the Chancellor highlighted the commitment to reduce the gender gap through Mexico’s feminist foreign policy, as well as supporting the La Serena Roadmap to ensure women’s participation in trade, finance and investment. The Chancellor Bárcena held bilateral meetings with its counterparts in Malaysia and the Republic of Korea.

Similarly, the announcement was made of the voluntary contribution of Mexico’s Government, through AMEXCID, to the APEC Policy Support Unit. This will be an initial capital to identify best practices in this area, in light of current global conditions, and to support the processes of Forum

⁴ Ministry of Economy, “México”, in Data Mexico, section “Foreign Trade”, at <https://www.economia.gob.mx/datamexico/en/profile/geo/mexico> (date of access: December 12, 2023).

members to effectively combat corruption. AMEXCID, in coordination with the Ministry of Civil Service, will promote this initiative during the works of the Forum in 2024.

As part of the celebration of Economic Leaders' Week, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris announced the launching of the Women in Sustainable Economy (WISE) initiative. It aims to increase women's access to jobs, training, leadership opportunities and finance in the green and blue economy. Mexico joined the initiative through the projects Territorial Strategy for the Reactivation of Autonomy and Economic Empowerment of Women of the National Institute of Women (INMUJERES) and AMEXCID's *Sembrando Vida* in Central America.

At the APEC Ministerial Meeting, APEC ministers reaffirmed their commitment to an open, dynamic and peaceful Asia-Pacific community. They presented achievements in trade and investment, economic integration, strengthening health systems and developing the digital economy. The statement emphasized the importance of APEC's role in global economic growth and cooperation, with specific attention to climate resilience, sustainable agriculture, gender equality and inclusive economic growth. In addition, the following documents were adopted to guide its work over the coming years: An anti-corruption roadmap; the Detroit Non-Binding Principles and Recommendations for Equality and Inclusion in Education, Training and Employment; the Just Energy Transition Initiative; and the Non-binding Just Energy Transition Principles for APEC Cooperation.

For his part, President López Obrador, in the framework of the 2023 APEC Economic Leaders Summit, met with Joseph Biden, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The President was accompanied by Chancellor Bárcena, Admiral José Rafael Ojeda Durán, Minister of the Navy, General Luis Cresencio Sandoval González, Minister of National Defense, Rosa Icela Rodríguez, Minister of Security and Citizen Protection; and Raquel Buenrostro Sánchez, Minister of Economy.

At the Meeting with invited economies, President López Obrador proposed to strengthen Mexico's connectivity and trade with Asia-Pacific through the Tehuantepec Isthmus Project, with the reconstruction of the railroad, in order to reduce freight transport time. Likewise, he praised the importance of promoting the peoples of southeastern Mexico and Central America through the ten development poles of the Isthmus and announced that,

in one of these, a complex will be created to produce green hydrogen, with no use of fossil fuels, enabling maritime mobility.

Subsequently, he stressed the need to increase investment in infrastructure in southeastern Mexico as a pillar of the interconnectedness of the Forum economies, with the aim of reducing inequalities and fostering development. In addition, he stressed the need to strengthen the Asia-Pacific commercial routes through the new trade route of the Tehuantepec Isthmus, sustainable tourism and regional integration thanks to the Maya Train. In addition, an invitation was made to the economies to strengthen cooperation and move toward a shared prosperity: “There are 1 billion human beings who survive on a dollar a day, how are we not to have issues with migration, environmental destruction, violence? If we suffer from a hideous economic and social inequality.”

Finally, the president shared the results of the Sembrando Vida project in Central America, designed to address the structural causes of migration through international cooperation for development, as well as the advances in the country’s domestic policy: “Despite [the pandemic and the negative effects on the economy of Russia’s and Ukraine’s war], through this new policy that we call the Fourth Transformation, we have achieved the reduction of poverty and inequality in Mexico.” The President expressed his gratitude for the U.S. Government’s invitation and stressed that “Mexico is the home of all of you.”

Following the leaders’ meetings, the 2023 APEC Leaders’ Golden Gate Declaration was adopted. After a three-day negotiation between the member economies of the Forum, the Government of Mexico’s priorities were included in the document, such as promoting inclusive trade and combating corruption. This statement reflects the leaders’ commitment to advance economic growth and resilience in Asia-Pacific.

Addressing a dynamic set of economic challenges, this paper highlights the importance of harnessing technological and economic progress to achieve sustainable growth and environmental protection. Commitments include integrating inclusiveness and sustainability into trade and investment policies, and promoting resilience, innovation and inclusion. Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to a free, fair and transparent trading and investment environment, supporting the rule based multilateral trading system and a WTO reform.

The Declaration also outlines initiatives related to economic integration, the development of quality infrastructure, climate change, renewable energy, food security, gender equality, the digital economy and the fight against corruption. Leaders committed to advancing economic inclusion and empowerment, supporting MSMEs and startups, and closing the digital divide.

Prospects for future cooperation

One of the main foreign policy objectives of the current administration has been to foster rapprochement between Mexico and the Asia-Pacific region, beyond the economic and trade dimension. In this regard, international cooperation for the development of our country has taken on a more significant role in bilateral relations with the region's countries, as well as with regional organizations.

For example, despite the mainly economic nature of APEC, this forum also houses spaces to foster cooperation in other equally relevant areas, such as working groups of experts on anti-corruption and transparency issues, or emergency preparedness. Our country has participated in these spaces seeking to foster the exchange of good practices and to strengthen the human capital of our public service. Likewise, during the APEC, Chancellor Bárcena announced the voluntary contribution of the Government of Mexico, through AMEXCID, to the APEC Policy Support Unit, in order to identify best anti-corruption practices in light of current global conditions and to support APEC members' processes for an effective anti-corruption combat.

On the other hand, cooperation agencies such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) or the Korea International Cooperation Agency, offer cooperation for the benefit of our country, with emphasis on the areas of economic, social and environmental development.

In 2023, the Japanese Volunteer Shipment Program, that had been interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was re-established. From 1993 to December 2023, there were 460 volunteers coming to our country to collaborate in the strengthening of Mexican institutions. For example, as part of JICA's Knowledge Co-Creation Program, every year members

of Mexican institutions and organizations receive training in agriculture, energy, gender equality, industry, environment, disaster risk reduction and public health.

In a global context affected by humanitarian crises, massive population displacements, structural inequalities, armed conflicts, natural disasters and other regional challenges such as poverty, gender gap and lack of energy and food security, international cooperation for development is a very effective tool for the solution of problems. In this respect, Mexico is changing the paradigm of international cooperation for development, becoming one of the first countries in the Global South to implement cooperation projects outside traditional schemes.

During this six-year term, AMEXCID has worked on the implementation of a strategic cooperation focused on human development, seeking to improve the living conditions of the beneficiary populations, both in Mexico and abroad. In this way, they highlight the cooperation agreements with Asia-Pacific in the health, science, innovation and technology sectors, which will continue to materialize positive results toward the future.