

## Sample texts in English

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### Press release

Available on the following web-address: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2016/08/mexico-first-official-visit-un-expert-group-business-and-human-rights>

# Mexico: First official visit by UN expert group on business and human rights

The United Nations Working Group on business and human rights will visit Mexico from 29 August to 7 September 2016 to examine efforts by the Government and business enterprises to prevent and address adverse human rights impacts of business activities.

“Mexico is a vast and diverse country, the second biggest economy in Latin America with large industries in a range of sectors, including electronics and automobiles, and important State-owned energy sector companies,” said human rights expert Pavel Sulyanziga, who currently heads the Working Group.

“We welcome the Government’s commitment to developing a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and we look forward to learning about the steps it is taking to integrate protections against business-related human rights abuse into policy and legislation,” he added.

The experts are looking at how the Mexican Government and businesses are implementing their respective human rights obligations and responsibilities, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights\*.

The UN Guiding Principles offer clarity and guidance for authorities and companies to prevent and address adverse impacts of business activities on human rights. They reaffirm States’ existing obligations to protect against human rights abuse by businesses. They also clarify the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, and the need to ensure that victims have access to effective remedy.

“In addition to engaging with the Government and various large companies and State-owned enterprises, we will meet a range of civil society actors, human rights defenders and members of indigenous communities” added Dante Pesce, the other member of the Working Group’s visiting delegation.

The experts, who visit the country at the invitation of the Mexican Government, will hold meetings in Mexico City and in the States of Oaxaca, Jalisco and Sonora.

At the end of their mission, on Wednesday 7 September, the experts will hold a press conference to share with the media preliminary observations from their visit at 13:00, at the UN Information Center, Montes Urales 440, Lomas de Chapultepec, Miguel Hidalgo, 11000 Mexico City. Access to the press conference is limited to journalists.

Findings from the country visit and recommendations will be published in a report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

For media requests and queries relating to the press conference on 7 September please contact: (In Mexico City) Mr. **Arturo Ávila** (+52 55 5061 6374 / +52 55 5438 1729 / [arturo.avila@hchr.org.mx](mailto:arturo.avila@hchr.org.mx)).

The Working Groups are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent human rights monitoring mechanisms. The Working Groups report to the Human Rights Council and to the UN General Assembly. Special Procedures mandate-holders are independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council to address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. The experts are not UN staff and are independent from any government or organization. They serve in their individual capacity and do not receive a salary for their work.

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#### **Press release**

Available on the following web-address: <https://www.focus-obs.org/documents/mexico-un-dh-reviews-protection-mechanism-and-makes-104-recommendations-for-its-strengthening/>

# Mexico: UN-DH reviews Protection Mechanism and makes 104 recommendations for its strengthening

Mexico City, August 26, 2019. At the request of the Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB), the Office in Mexico of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-HRC) conducted a diagnosis of the functioning of the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists (Mechanism). This diagnosis identifies strengths, good practices, and areas of opportunity to guide an inter-institutional strengthening process.

The document is the result of an analysis that included: a comprehensive documentary review of material on the Mechanism, both public and private; conducting over 100 hours of interviews with 147 people, prioritizing beneficiaries and officials of the Mechanism; observation and documentation of the

Mechanism's performance in different processes, including continuous monitoring since 2012; and exchanging reflections and proposals with individuals and entities experts in the protection of human rights defenders and journalists, including international human rights mechanisms. The UN-HRC emphasizes the transparency of the Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB) in this process, without which it would not have been possible to understand the strengths and areas of opportunity of the Mechanism so profoundly.

The existence of the Mechanism reaffirms the valuable role played by human rights defenders and journalists in society and the need for the government to provide them with protection, especially in the face of a concerning dynamic of attacks against those defending human rights and practicing journalism in Mexico. In conducting this diagnosis, the UN-HRC reinforced its conviction regarding the great importance of the Mechanism, recognized as such by several of the 62 beneficiary individuals interviewed, who emphasized that the protection provided by the Mechanism is the reason they are still alive.

Jan Jarab, Representative of the UN-HRC in Mexico, highlighted that "the progressive development of the Mechanism represents six years of learning, largely resulting from the commitment of those who work and have worked in the institution." He also mentioned that "the Law has shown the ability to offer a legal framework sufficiently flexible to facilitate the development of the Mechanism, and the participatory governance scheme it envisages is an international reference for citizen participation."

"However, the significant advances highlighted in the diagnosis should not prevent us from seeing that the Mechanism continues to constitute an insufficient response for various reasons, some of which persist since its creation," Jarab concluded.

The capacities of the Mechanism, particularly in terms of human and economic resources, are currently insufficient to meet the legal requirements and the real protection needs. The number of staff (36) has not changed since 2014, while the number of protected individuals increased by 236%, and this insufficiency is expected to worsen due to the growing trend of incorporation requests. For this year, SEGOB expects to be protecting 1,131 people, with an associated expense of 325 million pesos. However, the allocated budget for 2019 was 207.6 million pesos, corresponding to 64% of the projected expenditure and an amount lower than that spent in 2018 and 2017. In the face of the evident insufficiency of economic resources, SEGOB submitted an additional request for 150 million pesos on April 4, 2019, which has not yet been responded to.

The document also highlights that the Mechanism lacks a clear message of political prioritization that guarantees its main function of coordinating actions between the Federation and the federative entities to protect human rights defenders and journalists. One of the points emphasized by those interviewed by the UN-HRC, both beneficiaries and officials, was the lack of active participation by the authorities that make up the Governing Board. Following the commitments made by the Federal Government and CONAGO in 2017, some federative entities improved their response to emergencies, the effectiveness in implementing measures within their responsibility, and coordination for various actions, including prevention. However, these cases have been exceptional, and only 12 entities created their UEP, most of them without the necessary personnel and resources to operate properly. Additionally, it is noted that the Mechanism maintains its main focus on preventing harm, which is very important, without

prioritizing addressing the causes that generate the risk, which must be addressed through political and preventive actions that allow nullifying the origin of the risk. The lack of this preventive approach is the main reason why in 2017 only ten cases were concluded due to a reduction in risk, and in 2018, none. It is essential to understand that without a preventive focus combined with action aimed at eliminating the causes of risk, the need for individual protection will not decrease, and ultimately, the Mechanism will become ineffective and unsustainable.

According to statistics published by the Mechanism, in 55% of cases where alleged perpetrators were identified, they were public servants, who are subject to a higher level of responsibility due to their obligation to respect those engaged in journalism and human rights defense and to refrain from attacks against them. However, the diagnosis reveals that the Mechanism currently does not have operational criteria that explore the relevance of: publicly condemning any attack by public servants; referring the matter to the relevant prosecutor's office to initiate a criminal investigation; and initiating the corresponding administrative control and sanction procedure.

The need for changes represents a challenge that goes beyond the allocation of economic resources and requires a state response. In the face of this diagnosis and other efforts made, the UN-HRC sees it necessary to establish a route with a broad vision that allows for interinstitutional follow-up to the implementation of strengthening actions resulting from identified needs.

Finally, the UN-HRC thanks SEGOB for the opportunity to collaborate in strengthening the Mechanism and reiterates its full availability to continue supporting the implementation of the recommendations formulated in this diagnosis.

For more information and press inquiries, contact:

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Speech

# Remarks by Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Organization during the opening of the new offices of the ILO Country Office for Mexico and Cuba.

Good evening,

I would like to convey my warmest greetings to all of you who are here today. It is an enormous privilege for me to be with you.

It is no secret that my term as Director-General is coming to an end in just a few months, and I could not finish my tenure without first visiting, once again, this beloved country called Mexico.

More than three years have passed since my last visit to this country. The country I find today is remarkably transformed.

The advances in the labor field cannot be described in any other way than as historic.

Among the factors that have contributed to this strengthening are the entry into force of the labor reform and the commitments of the Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, the United States, and Canada (T-MEC).

But, above all, a public administration with a very strong social conviction, a strong and active labor union movement, and a solid business front always seeking dialogue.

These transformations could not have taken place at a more necessary time.

I have no doubt that, without the above, the bitter human, economic, and social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic would have been even more devastating.

Now, together, we face the formidable challenge of solidifying the recovery in the context of a post-pandemic crisis that is still ongoing and a clear global inflationary trend.

A tough challenge, but one that we have no choice but to overcome.

In 2019, during my last stay in Mexico, I expressed my commitment that the “ILO would be there to accompany Mexicans, the Government, workers, and employers in the construction of a better future of work.”

I sincerely believe that we have fulfilled this commitment.

The strengthened work team that accompanies us today and the new offices that we now place at your disposal are material evidence of our conviction to strengthen our capacity to accompany and assist you.

This new building, solid, modern, and well thought-out, reflects the ILO that we strive to be for you.

It is no coincidence that the center of this space is occupied by a room for dialogue, for indeed it could not be otherwise for an organization with dialogue at its heart.

Today I welcome you to a new home that will witness fruitful dialogues and committed actions in favor of a world of decent work and a more just and sustainable world.

In Mexico, we often hear the phrase “mi casa es tu casa” (my house is your house); today I will allow myself to take those words in the most literal sense possible. This house of ours is your house; it is for you, our partners, and constituents.

My visit to Mexico is brief, sadly only a few days, but a dedicated team remains with you in the country, made up of people with a deep-rooted conviction to collaborate shoulder to shoulder with you in building a better world of work.

My very dear Pedro Américo, here at my side, has the fundamental task of guiding those convictions so that our contributions are always strategic and provide the value that you expect from the ILO.

To this end, he has my full confidence.

I conclude by reiterating my appreciation to the entire team for their demonstrated commitment and to our constituents I thank them for their valuable confidence in our organization.

May this new working space in which we meet today be a point of encounter, dialogue, shared dreams, and progress to celebrate.

Thank you very much.