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López Obrador: No time to lose

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Andrés Manuel López Obrador says there is no time to lose to transform his country. After being elected President of Mexico July 1, he announced the first 13 reforms that he will send to Congress and that will mark the beginning of his government. But questions remain as to the situation he will be faced with when he assumes the presidency on December 1st.

The Mexico that López Obrador is to inherit is a country where violence, impunity, poverty, strained diplomatic relations, a weak economy, and cases of corruption have generated a crisis of unprecedented dimensions.

To offer just a few examples, from December 2012 to May 2018, 119,393 intentional homicides were recorded in Mexico, and there are currently 37,435 persons registered as disappeared.

According to a report by the National Human Rights Commission, from 2012 to 2017, 25 recommendations were issued relating to serious human rights violations. The killings of journalists reached a record figure with 44 cases documented under the current government, and a total of 117 recorded since 2000.

This is the scenario that the next government of the Republic will face, in addition to the consequences of the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the virtual bankruptcy of the Mexican state-owned petroleum company, PEMEX, and a human rights crisis that transcends borders.

The measures presented last Wednesday by the President-elect represent some of the legislative priorities of his government, and an attempt to address many of these problems.

Among other areas, included is a reform to end public officials' – including the president – exemption from prosecution and other privileges, and an announced law to allow recall referendums to revoke their mandates.

López Obrador explained that the reform to end privileges and immunity means that the President can be tried for electoral crimes and corruption, for which he is also requesting increased sentences, as well as for the theft of fuel.

The leader of the MORENA Party stated that he will undertake changes that will make it possible to streamline the public administration structure, as part of an announced austerity plan that also includes reducing the salaries of high-ranking officials and eliminating pensions for former presidents.

“Everything to do with the republican austerity plan and fighting corruption will have priority from the first day of the new Congress,” López Obrador added.

He also reiterated that he will seek to revoke or modify the educational reform undertaken by the current government, and establish the right to free public education at all levels of schooling.

“The consultation mechanism will be established by law for the revocation of mandates and will remove obstacles in all citizen referendum procedures, that must be binding in nature, with the purpose of enforcing participatory democracy,” he noted.

López Obrador secured a landslide victory with electoral pledges relating to the elimination of the profound corruption that plagues the country, which has also been hit by increased violence and weak economic growth.

This will be a huge challenge and not only for him, but also for his cabinet, which he has already begun to shape with the inclusion of different political and economic figures, who should, in his own words, work together on a common project that raises Mexico beyond what it is today.

## **MEASURES PROPOSED BY LÓPEZ OBRADOR**

- Regulatory law on maximum wages

- Creation of the Secretariat for Public Security
  - Abolition of impunity and privileges
  - New serious offences: corruption, fuel theft and electoral fraud
  - Budget and Income Law
  - Transfer the General Staff to the Secretariat of National Defense
  - Revoke decrees on water privatization
  - Revoke educational reform laws
  - Incorporate the right to higher education into Article 3 of the Constitution
  - Revocation of Mandate
  - Remove obstacles to Referendum
  - Reforms on increasing the minimum wage at the border
  - Adjust the administration to an austerity plan, without layoffs of lower level workers
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