

# Remarks by the President of the United Mexican States, Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, during the celebration of World Tourism Day

26 SEP



Thank you very much.

Good afternoon to each and every one of you.

Mr. Governor of the State of Jalisco,

Thank you very much once again for your hospitality. I am delighted to be here, in Guadalajara, in this beautiful Teatro Degollado, and to be with you during this celebration of World Tourism Day.

It is also my great pleasure to present my compliments to the distinguished representative of the World Tourism Organization, whose Secretary-General will be participating tomorrow in the high-level meeting.

I wish to greet the leaders of other entities who are present here today.

The members of the Cabinet of the Government of the Republic.

In particular, the Secretary of Tourism, who on Mexico's behalf is coordinating and carrying out this entire celebration of World Tourism Day.

Bearing in mind that Mexico is the host of this celebration out of all the countries of the world, which have chosen this region and Mexico in particular.

I present my compliments to the authorities of the various orders of government, the military commanders.

Federal and local legislators.

Municipal presidents, particularly of this municipality which is welcoming us today: Guadalajara.

The municipal presidents of the Magical Towns; of the 80 Magical Towns of the country, to whom I express my warmest affection.

Likewise, to the Ministers of the brother countries participating in this event.

Ambassadors.

The Diplomatic Corps accredited in our country present here today.

The Tourism Secretaries of the different entities of the country, who also form part of this important celebration of World Tourism Day.

To each and every one of you, I express my appreciation for your participation in this event, and it is a pleasure to greet you all.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Members of the media,

First of all, being here today in Guadalajara, in this beautiful state of our country, which is Jalisco, I would like to devote my first words to expressing my solidarity with the families of two people who are very dear among the citizens of this state, Congressman Gabriel Gomez Michel and his assistant, Heriberto Nunez Ramos.

To their families, their friends, their loved ones, I express my greatest solidarity and accompany them in their overwhelming sorrow.

I extend the same sentiments to fellow representatives and the constituents of this state, who were sadly hurt and affected by the deaths—and more so given the way they occurred—of the man who was their Federal Congressman and one of his collaborators.

To their families, friends, loved ones, I extend my greatest solidarity, my affection and my deepest condolences.

Mexico, Ladies and Gentlemen, ranks increasingly as a world-class tourist destination.

Here we find amassed great cultural, historical and natural riches. In addition to its privileged geographical situation, there is the warmth and friendliness of our people.

Every corner of this large country is a mosaic of colours, music and flavours; of architecture and traditions; of unforgettable experiences and activities.

It was thanks to all this that the World Tourism Organization chose Mexico as the host of World Tourism Day 2014.

Yesterday, we already began the celebration this important event, which promotes the social, cultural, political and economic value of tourism.

As has been mentioned here, the theme of this 2014 edition is: Tourism and Community Development. It is an invitation to find new ways to make this activity have even greater benefits to our societies.

Today, tourism generates 8.4 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product and employs 6.8 per cent of the working population of the country.

In addition, this rapidly-growing sector attracts investment and triggers local and regional development, while generating growth opportunities, especially for women and youth. In other words, tourism is a great social tool that narrows the equality gap and at the same time permits the advance of our communities.

Due to the potential of this activity, the Government of the Republic has defined tourism as a key sector. From the earliest days of the Administration we designed a new national tourism policy.

As already expressed and recognized here by the representative of the World Tourism Organization, the Tourism Cabinet was formed, and for the first time, the National Infrastructure Programme included tourism as one of its axes.

And for this purpose, public-private investment of over 181 billion pesos is set to be made for the development of major projects, among them: the creation of new tourist routes, the recovery of beaches and promenades, the construction of cultural centres, convention centres, hotels, parks and markets, as well as the improvement of the urban image of our tourism destinations.

In addition, other important communications and transportation projects that will have a positive impact on tourism are being carried out.

For example, and in addition to efforts specific to tourism, and since it is—as I have indicated—an activity that involves efforts of other agencies working on different projects, tourism is an activity that brings together cross-cutting efforts from different government agencies.

Therefore, we are also working to expand the capacity of our ports. In fact, the goal is to double what we have today.

Passenger trains will come into service, the road network and highways will be expanded and, as announced just a few weeks ago, we will be launching a project that will take more than one administration to complete—the construction of the new Mexico City International Airport.

And as I pointed out in the presentation of this project, it will be the main gateway of the world to our country, and that of our countrymen to other destinations in the world.

This project, the Mexico City International Airport, is designed to ensure that at maximum operating capacity, the airport will be able to handle approximately 120 million passengers a year.

To give some idea of the scale of its operations, it will have twice the current operating capacity of airports such as Dallas or Hong Kong.

This is the future scope and importance of this airport, which this government has decided to start building, and it will undoubtedly achieve its maximum operating capacity after this administration.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen the strategic planning of the tourism sector, 44 competitiveness agendas were developed, which will allow the modernization and revitalization of the main tourist destinations in the country, expand their offerings and improve the quality of services in the 32 states.

We have also joined forces with local governments to showcase Mexico and each of its states in the tourism promotion campaign called “Live It to Believe It”.

In addition, in the context of World Tourism Day, we have decided to relaunch the Magical Towns programme, as this is an effective instrument that combines tourist development with community development.

It is worth pointing out that—although they may not bear the official designation of a Magical Town—many other destinations in Mexico are no less magical.

The magic of Mexico, the magic of our different peoples, regardless of designation, really lies in the capacity to foster community development, to beautify their urban image and, above all, to make every town in every corner of our national geography a beautiful place that can be visited by domestic and foreign tourists.

The provision we made in the proposed budget that we have sent to the Chamber of Deputies for the Magical Towns Project allocates more than 500 million pesos for investments.

In addition, new and clearer rules for collaboration among the three levels of government are established and the participation of civil society is strengthened.

The goal is to ensure that the designation of a municipality as a Magical Town constitutes a guarantee, at the same time, of sustainability and long-term development of its community.

To this end, I also ordered the preparation of 83 Competitiveness and Sustainability Agendas for each of the 80 Magical Towns.

These planning tools have already been completed, and the Secretariat of Tourism will soon deliver them to the corresponding state and municipal governments.

Precisely in order to boost the international competitiveness and social development of these unique destinations, I have issued other instructions, two in particular:

I have tasked the Secretariat of Tourism with establishing an agreement with the Federal Electricity Commission, so that we can install underground wiring in the various Magical Towns, beginning with the most emblematic ones and those with the largest number of tourists.

I believe that much of the investment we will be making in the Magical Towns, with the participation and support of the Federal Electricity Commission, will allow us to modernize, change and improve the city's image, by, among other things, providing underground wiring for electricity supply.

And another very specific instruction is for the Magical Towns in our country to be equipped with free Internet access in their public spaces, and this is a project to be developed by the Secretariat of Tourism and the Secretariat of Communications and Transport.

This is another instruction that I have clearly given to the responsible officials.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This week, as you know through the media, we went on a working visit to New York in the context of the 69th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Upon meeting with global leaders, entrepreneurs or investors, I spoke to them about the strengths of Mexico and the transformation we are experiencing to become a more dynamic and more prosperous economy.

This shows that these international tours help attract more productive investment, investments that generate employment in our country.

And, above all, they serve to put into context the dimension and scale of how we want to project Mexico to the world.

While certain subjects or information seem to be common knowledge among Mexicans, it is important that the world know about them, that the world know about our strengths, our natural resources, and the generosity of our people, so they may come and invest and to come to visit our country.

I can say and share with you that Mexico is generating a lot of excitement in the world, and this is reflected in increased tourism activity; 2013 was the most successful year for tourism in our country, as it posted a record in the number of international tourists who visited us, 24.2 million tourists.

With this, our country consolidated itself—and while this may seem to be an isolated piece of information, it is important to keep it in mind—our country consolidated itself as the second most important tourist destination in all of the Americas.

We received more visitors than several countries together. We could add up the number of tourists in countries such as Brazil, Egypt and India and even taken together, the number of tourists is barely equal to that received by our country.

This is how important Mexico is today and how Mexico is seen in the world for those who want to get to know it and want to know other parts of the world.

In addition, I am pleased to share with you that in 2014 this positive trend continues.

During the first seven months of the year, the flow of international tourists was 16.2 million people; in other words, nearly 20 percent higher than during the same period last year, which itself was already a record-setting year in terms of visitors to our country.

In order to maintain and build on these important gains, we must redouble our efforts to continue to support the more than 500,000 economic units that benefit from tourism.

Therefore, in the context of this 2014 edition of World Tourism Day, I reaffirm the support of the Government of the Republic to the thousands of service providers, hoteliers, tour guides, artisans, transporters and entrepreneurs linked to the sector.

We will continue transforming Mexico so that its activities can grow and contribute to generating prosperity for Mexicans.

From Guadalajara, a proud Mexican land, I invite more tourists, domestic and foreign, to get to know and enjoy this great nation that is Mexico.

I wish you the greatest success in this event.

May the participation of other ministers from our different brother countries in the celebration of World Tourism Day allow us to share successful experiences that strengthen tourism and, above all, contribute to the community development of our peoples.

Thank you and congratulations.