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Summits of the Americas

Progress Report from Mexico on Implementation of the Commitments made at the IV Summit of the Americas

The Fight Against Poverty

In its resource allocation, the Government of Mexico prioritized programs that have a direct impact on the well-being of the population by improving the living conditions, standard of living, and quality of life, particularly of the neediest families.

In June 2006, current programmable spending reached 582.0962 billion pesos, which is 1.2 percent higher in real terms than what was recorded for the same period a year earlier.

Spending on education, health, food, and nutrition increased by 54.4 percent between 2000 and 2006. Resources for creating jobs and income generating opportunities rose by 11.3 percent; and expenditures to expand the social infrastructure and household wealth increased 63.1 percent. Meanwhile, the budget for social protection programs, particularly in healthcare, increased more than 80 times during that period. From January to July 2006, 80.4503 billion pesos were executed, which constitutes real growth of 23.7 percent compared to the same period the previous year.

Out of this total, 45 percent was spent on capacity development, 33.4 percent on development of financial security, 10.5 percent on income-generating alternatives, and 11.1 percent on social protection.

One priority of the Federal Government, which has been a central objective of social policy in recent years, is to overcome the poverty and exclusion to which a large segment of the Mexican population has been subjected. To this end, a strategy called *Contigo* has been developed, incorporating various activities and programs to enhance nutrition, education, health and social services, create jobs, and provide job training and access to housing. *Contigo* (“with you”) has fostered progress in overcoming the major obstacles facing the population living in poverty.

Contigo has enabled the Federal Government to better coordinate government activity in the area of social development so as to make more efficient use of available resources. In 2006 it had a budget of 146.376 billion pesos, which is 70.5 percent higher than the 2000 budget in real terms.

Oportunidades has become a cutting edge program in developing human potential. It has garnered the recognition of such international institutions as the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Children's Fund, and more than 20 countries that seek to replicate the program. In November of 2005 the program was awarded the National Prize for Innovation in Public Administration for the second consecutive year.

The *Oportunidades* program grew from covering 2.5 million families in 2000 to 5 million families by 2004. Coverage of highly and very highly marginalized communities increased from 47,597 in 2000 to 62,208 by July of 2006. Of the 5 million families covered in 2006, 68.8 percent were in rural areas, 14 percent in urban areas, and 17.2 percent in semi-urban areas, including 2,435 municipalities.

Education

The Government of Mexico has made major investments in education, which serves as the backbone of national development and an ideal tool for tackling the problems of poverty and inequality that exist in the country.

In 2006 national spending on education was estimated at 622.3909 billion pesos, which in real terms marks a 1.5 percent increase over 2005 levels, and a 25.7 percent increase compared to the beginning of the administration. This spending on education accounts for 7.1 percent of GNP, whereas in 2000, 6.4 percent of GNP was spent on education. Thus, education is the best financed of the social sectors.

Federal spending on education during 2006 was programmed to be 372.5177 billion pesos, which is 18.7 percent higher in real terms than the amount spent in 2000. Of this amount, 63.5 percent was for primary education, 10.6 percent was for secondary education, and 19.1 percent was for higher education. The remaining 6.8 percent was spent on adult education and cultural, sports, and administrative activities.

During the past six school years, the **National School System** has incorporated 3.1 million students into its various kinds and levels of education. There has been a significant increase in educational services for the most vulnerable and lagging social groups. In 2005-2006 there were 32.3 million students enrolled, which marked an increase of 585,600 students over the previous school year.

During the 2005-2006 school year 6.1 million scholarships were granted to students in primary, secondary, and higher education, which is an increase of 4.5 percent over the previous year. The ***Oportunidades* Human Development Program** and the **National Higher Education Scholarship and Financing Program** are noteworthy for their coverage and effectiveness. 6.3 million scholarships are expected to be handed out in 2006-2007, which is 189,200 more than in the previous year and 2.2 times what was granted in the year 2000.

Of the total scholarships granted in 2005-2006, 77.6 percent were for basic education, and 22.4 percent were for young people in secondary and higher education.

In terms of human resources gaining post-graduate training, during 2006 Mexico had approximately 41,779 researchers at public and private universities, research centers, and in the private sector. This figure is 9 percent higher than the previous year and 88 percent higher than in the year 2000.

To consolidate progress in this area, Mexico has reinforced the **National Higher Education Scholarship Program (PRONABES)**, which covers almost 70 percent of all higher education scholarships. During the 2001-2002 school year more than 44,000 students received such aid, while during the 2005-2006 school year 161,787 students benefitted, which marks a 3.6-fold increase. Of these, 79,499 were repeat scholarship recipients while 82,288 benefited from PRONABES for the first time. During the five years that the program has been functioning, 322,197 scholarships have been granted, 26,490 students have concluded their studies during those four years, and 239,045 applicants received scholarships more than once.

Job Creation

The working age population in Mexico (15 to 64 years old) and number of senior citizens (65 or older) continue to grow. These groups increased by 1.1 million and 182,000, respectively, in 2006 compared to 2005.

The **net generation of jobs** for urban workers affiliated with the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) was 576,600 posts in 2005, practically twice the number of jobs created the previous year. During the first six months of 2006, 546,300 additional jobs were created.

One of the objectives of the economic strategy was to recover workers' real wage levels. Average wages reported to the IMSS from January 2001 to June 2006 had a nominal increase of 47 percent, which in real terms amounts to recovery of 17.1 percent.

Contractual wages under federal jurisdiction in effect from January 2001 to July 2006 recorded an average nominal increase of 5.5 percent, which represents a recovery of the purchasing power of workers' income of approximately 0.7 percent. This is a favorable result when compared to the situation from 1995 to 2000 when despite a nominal wage increase of 16.4 percent, because of inflation there was a net loss of workers' purchasing power of 3.7 percent.

On January 15, 2007 the President of Mexico signed a decree establishing the **National First Job Program**. Through this program the Federal Government pays the employer's contribution to the IMSS for each new worker during their first 12 months on the job. On February 27, 2007 the operational guidelines of the program were published in the federal register, and it went into effect on March 1.

On March 6, 2007 the President of Mexico signed a decree granting incentives to taxpayers who hire persons with disabilities or adults aged 65 or older. Such employers will be allowed to reduce the income that they report under the Federal Income Tax Law by 25% of the wages they pay to people in these categories during the fiscal year.

The **National Employment Service (SNE)** for states, through **Support for Employment (PAE)** and the **Local Development Program (PDL) – MicroRegions** – and **Labor Linkages Services**, continued to facilitate contacts between job-seekers and potential employers. They steer job-seekers to existing vacancies, support skills training for the unemployed and underemployed population according to the needs of the productive sector, and help businesses fill their staffing needs, among other functions.

During the first six months of 2006 the SNE served 1,076,705 people, placing 281,977 of them in jobs. This gives the SNE a placement rate of 26.2 percent, 0.7 percentage points higher than during the same period of 2005.

Out of the total number of people who found jobs through SNE programs, 66.9 percent did so through the Labor Linkages Services, 32 percent through the PAE, and the remaining 1.1 percent thanks to support from the PDL.

The cost of services delivered through the PAE and the PDL were defrayed by 459.2 million pesos earmarked for that purpose, which is 24 percent higher in real terms than the funds set aside for that purpose during the same period of 2005.

During the first six months of the year the PAE served 180,390 people, placing 90,325 of them in jobs, which amounts to a placement rate of 50.1 percent.

The **Training Support Program** fosters the training of workers and employers in micro, small, and medium-sized companies by awarding funds for activities to enhance the productivity levels of workers and the competitiveness of companies. These activities are carried out pursuant to the legal precept established in the Federal Labor Law, which obliges companies to provide on-the-job training to their employees.

From January to July 2006 the program served 175,395 workers at 24,058 companies in 20,622 training events. These figures are 53.5, 92.0, and 87.6 percent higher, respectively, than the figures for the same period in the previous year.

During the first seven months of 2006 the program spent 84.219 billion pesos, which is 59.9 percent higher in real terms than the amount recorded during the same period of 2005. In the allocation of resources for training, priority was given to micro and small enterprises, which helped companies in this sector develop and become more permanent.

During the 2005-2006 school year, 1.2 million people attended **training centers**, 64.4 percent of them in public institutions and 35.6 percent of them in private centers.

On April 24, 2006 an executive order was published in the federal register creating the **National Workers' Consumer Fund Institute (FONACOT Institute)**, which took on legal standing and proprietary capital. It is now better positioned financially to fulfill its mission of promoting savings among low-income workers and their families by granting below market-rate loans for the procurement of high quality goods and services at competitive prices.

The FONACOT Institute developed new programs in the areas of health services, better housing, vehicles, training and education, leisure and cultural activities, support for family businesses, and financial security. From January to July 2006, 1,294,129 loans were granted to just over 5.5 million people for their overall development and to enhance household wealth.

During the first seven months of 2006, the Secretariats of Social Development (SEDESOL), Communications and Transportation (SCT), and the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) spent 526.5 million pesos to create 94,700 jobs, the equivalent of 8.3 million days of work.

On March 2, 2005 the **Mexican Labor Observatory (OLA)** began operations. It is an up-to-date and free-of-charge public service that brings together information on Federal Government programs and services in a single electronic portal (www.observatoriolaboral.gob.mx). It contains information on vocational counseling, job linkages, labor statistics, high quality educational opportunities, job support and training programs, and financial advice and other advisory services for entrepreneurs.

Between its opening date and July 2006, the OLA portal was consulted by more than 913,000 users, making it one of the most visited government internet portal. Between January and July 2006, the portal received more than 312,000 hits and responded to 100 percent of its 511 e-mail inquiries.

Between September 2005 and July 2006, more than 80,000 students in secondary and higher education attended OLA job fairs and programs.

The Office of the Federal Labor Attorney (PROFEDET) and the Federal Reconciliation and Arbitration Board (JFCA) have enforced strict compliance with the Federal Labor Law, seeking a balance among the productive sectors by resolving conflicts under federal jurisdiction that may arise between employers and employees, giving preference to reconciliation and, as appropriate, arbitration. Between January and July 2006 the Office of the Federal Labor Attorney handled 60,778 cases and concluded 59,430 of them. Of these, 55,255, or 93 percent, were decided in favor of the employees.

Support for Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises

The Secretariat of Economics (SE) coordinates programs to support the productive initiatives of low-income individuals and social groups. It conducts activities to facilitate entrepreneurs' access to financial and training services through small-scale production projects, which have traditionally not been accessible to them.

On March 5, 2007, the President of Mexico signed an agreement creating the **Mexican Committee for Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises**. The purpose of this inter-Cabinet, permanent committee is to foster a public-private partnership to coordinate, guide, and promote strategies and activities for the comprehensive development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. The committee brings together in one place support for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and will coordinate the **National Fund for Social Enterprises (FONAES)**, the **National**

Microenterprise Financing Program (PRONAFIM), and the Fund for the Support of Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (Fondo PYME).

From January to July 2006 the National Foreign Trade Bank (BANCOMEXT) provided \$3 billion in financing, which was 43.2 percent of the annual goal. Of that total, 2.86 billion was in credit, 93 percent of which went to direct exporters.

Under the **Program to Strengthen Businesses and Rural Organizations (PROFEMOR)**, 1,670 economic organizations received support for their internal structure between January and July 2006, and 1,492 Municipal and District Councils for Sustainable Rural Development received support through a rural development coordinator to strengthen their institutional capacity.

The **Program of Tax Incentives to Promote Technological Management** allows businesses to accredit resources in order to increase investment. In 2006, 4 billion pesos was authorized to this program, which is 28.9 percent higher in real terms than what was authorized in 2005. The incentives for 2006 marked real growth of 309 and 7.1 times, respectively, compared to what was allocated at the beginning of the program in 2000 and 2001. Seventy percent of the 850 businesses supported by this tax stimulus package were small and medium-sized.

In order to reduce costs to companies in the financial sector, 14 duplicate or unnecessary procedures were eliminated and 25 others were modified by removing requirements for attached documents. This reduced the wait time for a response from the authorities. In order to consolidate these improvements, the National Securities and Banking Commission issued the **Single Bank Letter**, which unifies all regulation under this one instrument, thereby doing away with obsolete, duplicate, and contradictory regulations, along with discretion by the authority.

The **Rapid Business-Opening System (SARE)** supports the efforts of municipal governments to enhance their competitiveness and capacity to attract more investment in production. The SARE has made it possible to cut the average time to open a business in the municipalities in which it operates to 72 hours, because only two federal procedures and two to three state and municipal government procedures are required, which can be performed at a single window. Businesses can be opened quickly when their predominant activity is one of the 685 low-risk economic activities in Mexico.

From the time this system began operations in 2002 through August 4, 2006, coverage has spread to 29 states and 102 municipalities. Of these, 17 municipalities in 11 states adopted the system during 2006, which exceeds the goal of 100 SARES established for the 2002-2006 period.

74,972 new businesses have opened under the SARE, creating 194,220 jobs with an investment of 12.642 billion pesos. And according to the latest economic census data of the National Institute for Statistics, Geography, and Information Science (INEGI), localities that use SARE account for 46.2 percent of total gross production in the sectors of trade, services, and industry.

From 2001 to June 2006, the **National Program to Support Assistance Enterprises** gave support to 20,031 social enterprises and productive projects with 3.6345 billion pesos in funding. Of this total, 2,009 companies received 502.8 million pesos between January and June 2006. 36.1

percent of these companies and projects benefited from a tool called **Productive Boost for Women (IPM)**, which provides support to develop production units comprised exclusively of women.

The **Micro-Financing Fund for Rural Women** granted over 1.55 billion pesos in credit through 950,718 micro-loans to 710,127 low-income women living in rural areas.

The entire population's access to **healthcare** is one of the centerpieces of Mexico's social policy, as is reflected in the steady rise in resources channeled into health. This has helped improve the population's health indicators.

In June of 2006, expenditures on health stood at 91.4322 billion pesos, marking 15.4 percent growth in real terms compared to the same period the previous year. As a percentage of total outlays on social development, this figure went from 18.8 percent in the first half of 2005 to 20.7 percent during the first half of 2006.

The **People's Social Security System (SISSP)** was created in February of 2006. Together with the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) and the Government Workers' Social Services and Security Institute (ISSSTE), it is the third pillar of social security in Mexico. Its main objective is to cover all self-employed people who work in agriculture or small businesses, who are not on a payroll, or who work for a fee.

This system offers the beneficiaries a **Retirement Savings System** through the *Oportunidades* Program; housing subsidies granted through the National Housing Development Commission; and medical services offered by the People's Health Insurance.

In February of 2006 the Secretariat of Health issued an agreement creating the **National Social Protection Council**, which is in charge of coordinating and analyzing the activities of the various government entities linked to social protection.

The main objective of the SISSP is to provide financial protection to people who are not beneficiaries of such public social security institutions as the IMSS and ISSSTE. This protection is provided through a new public health insurance system coordinated by the Federal government and operated by states. The **People's Health Insurance** program (SPS) provides a benefits package that enables the neediest families to reduce unforeseen costs when managing their health problems.

Since it began operations in 2002, the **Starting Life on the Right Foot Program (APV)** has improved care for children under age two and for women during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. The goal is to fight maternal, neonatal, and infant mortality in our country.

From January to July 2006 in each of the 32 states, every pregnant woman received an average of 3.8 prenatal care visits, which is 2.7 percent more than during the same period of the previous year. Of the total number of births covered, 87.2 percent were attended by trained personnel, which is a 2.1 percentage point increase over the 85.4 percent of the same period the previous year.

In the first half of 2006, 704,400 pregnant women received care from the Secretariat of Health, which is 6 percent more than in the first half of 2005. Of these, 32 percent were in the first trimester. Of the total number of pregnant women, 23.6 percent were under twenty years of age, similar to the previous year's figure.

The **Program for Specialized Medical Care in the Community (Surgery Outside the Walls)** provides general, orthopedic, ophthalmological, and reconstructive surgery to populations living in highly and very highly marginalized areas that are very geographically disperse. In 2005, 31,120 surgeries were performed on 30,139 people in the various areas of specialization. Of this total, 16,797 were general surgeries, 9,661 were ophthalmological surgeries, 2,634 were reconstructive surgeries, and 2,028 were orthopedic surgeries. From January to June 2006, 9,797 surgeries were performed on 7,504 patients in the various specialties. Of this total, 5,481 were general surgeries, 2,941 were ophthalmological surgeries, 1,460 were reconstructive surgeries, and 365 were orthopedic surgeries.

The decision to adopt a cross-cutting strategy has had a fundamental impact on guiding public policies for the **comprehensive development of indigenous peoples**. In other words, diagnosis and planning have been used to join the efforts of different institutions with complementary functions and programs, in order to improve indigenous people's standards of living while respecting their cultural diversity. These activities have focused on establishing operational mechanisms that allow and foster the coordination of activities among the various states and agencies and the three levels of government.

During the 2005-2006 school year, enrollment of **indigenous people in basic education** (preschool and primary) was 1,190,932 students, which is 10,010 more than the enrollment for the previous school year.

The purpose of the **Indigenous School Lodging Program** of the Commission of Indigenous Peoples (CDI) is to allow indigenous boys and girls from areas that do not have schools to enroll and complete their basic education. To this end they are given food, care, and safe lodging. During the 2006 fiscal year a budget of 377 million pesos was authorized. From January to July, 223.2 million pesos were executed, which is 33.3 million pesos more than during that period of 2005, or a 13.7 percent increase in real terms.

A scholarship mechanism enabled 59,731 indigenous boys and girls in 1,081 indigenous school lodging sites located in 21 states to attend school.

At the beginning of the 2006 fiscal year a budget of 23.2 million pesos was authorized for the operation of 79 Community Lodging sites. At the end of the 2005-2006 school year, 4,644 scholarship recipients were enrolled, which marks a 74.3 percent increase over the previous year. Demand has risen and the funds allocated to the Indigenous School Lodging Program have increased, such that the young beneficiaries are now able to finish secondary and higher education. During 2006 3.7 million pesos were allocated for 370 students in higher education.

In 2006, 100 million pesos was programmed to finance 1,925 projects for the **Productive Organization Program for Indigenous Women (POPMI)**. During the first seven months, 57.5 million pesos were executed (57.5 percent), which supported 1,309 projects in that number of productive organizations in 23 states, for the benefit of 13,991 indigenous women. The number of projects increased 77-fold compared to January-July 2005, growing from 17 to 1,309.

From January to July 2006, 25 **training workshops** were held with indigenous outreach workers and operators of executing agencies in the various states. These events paved the way for training 14,000 indigenous women. In order to strengthen the technical support for the projects, seven workshops were held with 244 program operators, and 27 regional meetings were held with 340 women representing the beneficiary groups. The purpose was to train them in the priority areas related to their projects.

On the occasion of the 52nd Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in October of 2005, the Third Working Meeting was held with 320 female government officials to publicize the activities being carried out in the agencies and offices of the Federal Executive Branch, and to promote implementation of the **Program to Institutionalize a Gender Perspective**. From September 2005 to August 2006, consciousness raising and gender perspective training was provided to 6,206 male and female employees of the Mexican Government, and to 1,556 staff members of private companies, social agencies, and the general population.

Strengthening of Democratic Governance

The Federal Executive Branch has been trying to strengthen democracy in all spheres of social and political life. To this end, and in strict adherence to the rule of law, a policy of shared responsibility has been promoted in the exercise of government among the branches of government and the citizens to build a better Mexico.

Mexico has strengthened its culture of democracy and citizen's participation by promoting the democratization of government power. This is upheld by adherence to the law, respect for the system of checks and balances in the branches of government, pluralistic and inclusive dialogue, transparency and accountability, and tolerance and freedom of expression.

The Government of Mexico continues to implement the **Special Program to Foster a Democratic Culture (PEFCD)**, with the resolute aim of spreading the word about democratic culture, principles, and values, as well as the active, enthusiastic, and committed participation of citizens in public affairs.

Respect for Human Rights

Enjoyment of human rights is one of the most important principles of democracy and development. Therefore, the current administration has promoted respect for and the defense of human rights as enshrined in the Constitution, the laws, and international treaties.

The Government of Mexico has used the **National Human Rights Program (PNDH)** to foster the construction of a Mexico in which people can fully enjoy their fundamental rights. On December 9, 2005 the first Execution Report of the PNDH was presented. It documented implementation of more than 400 activities aimed at consolidating a long-term policy of promoting and defending human rights.

Transparency and the fight against corruption

Society has demanded an honest, transparent, and results-oriented government, and the Government of Mexico has made a firm commitment to deliver that. For this reason, the Federal Government stepped up implementation and follow-up on strategies established to prevent, combat, and curtail acts of corruption and impunity in the Federal Public Administration (APF); established better systems of oversight and control; and strictly enforced the legal provisions that regulate the exercise of power, as well as applying sanctions for any irregular conduct. There is also an effort to guarantee absolute transparency in public office and to promote an authentic anti-corruption culture among public officials and society.

The SFP works through the Oversight and Monitoring Agencies (OVC), which include internal control bodies as well as delegates, sub-delegates, and public vigilance officers in the offices and entities of the APF. It takes a preventive approach to monitor whether government is run efficiently, professionally, and honestly, applying corrective measures as necessary. To this end, modern systems have been developed and implemented to measure and evaluate performance. This not only guides the OVCs to help them attain the goals and objectives of the APF institutions, it also helps reduce the risk of secrecy and discourages illicit behavior in public institutions.

The government has a commitment to incorporate the concepts and practices of a culture of total quality into its daily public management activities. This is geared toward consolidating intelligent government centered around meeting the needs and expectations of society. It is subject to continuous and rigorous accountability through advanced administrative and technological systems. Three fundamental tactics have been applied to raise government productivity and efficiency, as outlined below.

The **INTRAGOB Quality Model** focuses on meeting the needs and expectations of citizens. It is the focal point of quality efforts, continuous improvement, innovation, competitiveness, integrity, and transparency in the APF. It seeks to identify strengths, capacities, and areas of opportunity in order to optimize performance and attain results that will improve processes and make more efficient use of resources so as to enhance the value of what citizens receive from government goods and services.

The Federal Institute for Access to Public Information (IFAI) has become the entity in charge of protecting the right to access information. It foments transparency in public office, ensures protection of personal data, and promotes substantive improvements in the organization, classification, and management of documents and files in the hands of the Federal Government. The **Information Requests System (SISI)**, managed by the IFAI, allows each citizen to obtain public information in order to scrutinize the operation of government offices and entities.

During the first half of 2006, the entities and offices registered in the SISI received 29,741 information requests, which was 31.4 percent more than that recorded for the period in 2005. This shows that the IFAI has gained the public's confidence in procuring government information, and has made a decisive contribution toward consolidating transparency and a culture of accountability.

Electronic Government

The purpose of the *Digital Government* strategy is to optimize the use of information and communications technology in the functioning of APF offices and entities. This expedites transactions conducted by citizens, helps make the business of government transparent, raises the quality of government services, and detects any potentially corrupt practices within public institutions in a timely fashion.

Digital government, known as **e-Government**, is a component of the **National e-Mexico System**, which promotes heavy use of digital systems, particularly the Internet, as primary working tools for the units of the APF, through seven lines of action:

In December of 2005 the **Global e-Government Readiness Report 2005** was released by the United Nations. It placed Mexico in 31st place out of the 191 countries evaluated. The Report put Mexico in 11th place in terms of sophistication and readiness of on-line government services; in sixth place in terms of *e-participation*, and it recognized Mexico as one of the top ten countries in terms of swift and effective progress with *e-Government* strategies.

Also in December of 2005 the agreement establishing the *Inter-Secretariat Commission to Develop Electronic Government* was reached. Its purpose is to support various governmental initiatives, projects, and processes in electronic government. The Agreement also establishes a permanent Executive Board comprised of those responsible for Information and Communications Technology units, the subcommittees on Advanced Electronic Signature, and the Automated Management Control Systems, as well as those in charge of issues governing technology policy.

As of July 2006, the citizenry had access to 1,876 e-government transactions and services on-line, which were provided by the offices and entities of the APF through internet portals, telephone call centers, kiosks and citizens' service windows. Also on that date, 7,500 **digital community centers** were in operation, covering all the municipalities in the country and the delegations in the Federal District. These facilitate internet connectivity for remote communities, thereby disseminating information to more users and offering access to services available through e-Government, e-Education, e-Health, and e-Economy, which are the components of the National e-Mexico System.

Through the *Citizens' Portal*, <http://www.gob.mx/> one can conduct transactions and ask questions by visiting a site that taps into the most frequently consulted services and information in the Federal Government. The Portal presents all of the most relevant government information resources, services, and transactions in an organized way, classified by topic and citizens' needs. Between January and July 2006 the portal received an average of 20,000 hits daily, and users reported a 66 percent satisfaction rate.

The **Federal Government Citizens' Portal** has become a link in the creation of value chains and an efficient means to allow citizens' participation, transparency, and accountability. Through this portal a citizen can use the internet to find information about APF products, services, and transactions. The portal is also a link for communication and interaction between the government and its citizens, private sector enterprises, and among the various government institutions.

Below are the electronic transactions and services most frequently requested by citizens through the portal:

IMSS from your Company. This enables companies to register their employees with the social security system quickly and promptly via internet, thus reducing the number of transactions and waiting time. 12 million workers had benefited from this service as of June 2006, which represents 94.2 percent of the workers affiliated with the Mexican Social Security Institute.

IMSS Electronic Clinical File. This new tool makes it possible to record and carefully monitor the health status of users of medical services. As of June 2006, more than 800 family practice units had been incorporated into this service, and 5,890 medical offices had been completely computerized. This represents 88 percent of total medical care at that level.

ISSSTE. From January to June 2006, the Institute consolidated its digital infrastructure and finished installing 21 technological systems and applications. The most prominent ones are: Electronic Clinical File; Telephone Medical Appointments via Internet; and ISSSTE mobile from the ISSSTE med module, which benefited a population of more than 8.1 million beneficiaries, including pensioners.

CHAMBATEL and CHAMBANET. These programs were effective in connecting job seekers with employers offering jobs. From the time they were implemented through June 2006, the two programs together had served more than 14 million job seekers, and succeeded in finding employment for more than 180,000 of them.

The ***Program to link the Federal Government Citizens' Portal with the Portals of State Governments.*** Its purpose is to help all citizens in the country conduct electronic transactions and receive services in the federal and local government. From its installation in October of 2004 through June of 2006, the virtual sites of 22 states were integrated into it.

The **Electronic System of Government Contracting (COMPRANET)** has been accredited by the World Bank as the only system of public government bidding via internet established in Latin America. This has lent transparency to the process of government tenders for goods, services, lease agreements, and public works. In 2006 COMPRANET's operations had reached all the offices and entities of the APF, the administrations of the 32 states, and 471 of the municipalities in the country.

During the first half of 2006, the COMPRANET System recorded 15,495 public tenders, of which 50.2 percent (7,784) were conducted electronically. This is a 10.7 percent increase over the first half of 2005. The amount of resources involved in the electronic bidding was 79.041 billion pesos, equal to 80.4 percent of the total of bids recorded in the first half of the year. Additionally, 855 civil servants were trained in the use of the system during that time period, and 618 public sector

providers were certified, so as to facilitate their participation in the APF contracting and procurement processes.