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European Union/Mexico: EU responsibility to urge Mexican President-elect to commit to human rights

On the eve of the President-elect of Mexico's visit to Europe, Amnesty International has called on EU member states to ensure that the President-elect's new government will make a clean break with Mexico's long history of gross human rights abuses. The EU must urge Vincente Fox, the President-elect, to make human rights the cornerstone of his government's policies and program of work.

A six-year program on the promotion and protection of human rights should be made public by the President-elect as soon as possible, and certainly within 100 days of him assuming the presidency this coming December.

Amnesty International also sees the visit as an opportunity to remind both the EU member states and President-elect Fox of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement on trade, which obliges both parties to respect human rights and democratic principles.

President-elect Fox will be visiting a number of EU countries, including France, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom. Amnesty International is calling on each of the visited states to urge that:

- Vicente Fox's new government reviews Mexico's National Human Rights Plan in conjunction with Mexico's non-governmental human rights organisations;*
- international human rights standards will be the benchmark by which the new administration will be guided in implementing a revised National Human Rights Plan;*

- the judicial system is overhauled, to ensure that the rule of law will be independent and effective;
- torture, enforced disappearances and political killings are outlawed and abolished in practice, and impunity is brought to an end.

Pierre Sané, Amnesty International's Secretary General, has written to Jacques Chirac, President of France and currently president of the EU; Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy; and Christopher Patten, the EU Commissioner for External Relations, setting out the organisation's concerns in Mexico and requesting that they impress on President-elect Fox the importance of his government's obligations regarding the protection of human rights.

Amnesty International shares the hopes of many Mexicans that President-elect Fox will take concrete steps to make the protection and promotion of human rights a priority.

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