

## Betting everything on the Maya Train is the wrong bet and a threat to tourism: Coparmex

Mexico News Daily, Thursday, February 7, 2019

Lack of long-term vision threatens tourist industry, business group warns



The Mexican Employers Federation (Coparmex) has described the federal government's decision to concentrate tourism funding on the Maya Train project as "almost suicidal."

In his weekly bulletin, Coparmex chief Gustavo de Hoyos wrote that the government's decision to bet "everything" on the [ambitious rail project](#) in the country's southeast is the "wrong bet" and a "high risk."

Published under the title "*Tourism Development Mustn't Stop*," de Hoyo's dispatch contended that the government's intention to focus on "a few projects such as the Maya Train" was a result of President López Obrador's prerogative alone.

"In many cases, [the projects] lack economic and environmental viability studies and even the support of local communities," he wrote.

The business leader said that the new federal administration has allocated "nothing to comprehensive tourism development" and that the tourism-related decisions it has taken, such as the [cancellation of the new Mexico City airport project](#) and

the [disbandment of the Tourism Promotion Council \(CPTM\)](#), are having a negative effect on Mexico's image and undermining potential for growth in the tourism sector.

"At Coparmex, we reject the weakening or elimination of key organizations for the development of the tourism sector. If excesses were found, correct them. If there was corruption, let it be prosecuted and penalized. But don't threaten an industry that makes a great contribution to Mexico and [represents] its biggest potential," he wrote.

De Hoyos pointed out that the tourism industry generates almost one in 10 formal jobs in Mexico and contributes US \$21 billion to the economy annually.

He also said that "Mexico's tourism offerings are very diverse and dispersed across the whole national territory," adding that it was "not valid" for the government to abandon some regions of the country in its tourism strategy.

The tourism industry, de Hoyos charged, "is a victim of the lack of long-term vision on the part of the [current] authorities."

The Coparmex chief said that it was concerning that "the federal government has decided to minimize, and in some cases completely eliminate, the work of the institutions" that are responsible for Mexico's tourism success.

The National Tourism Promotion Fund (Fonatur) has been responsible for the planning and development of tourism projects and the construction and maintenance of basic infrastructure in Mexico's most important destinations such as Los Cabos and Cancún, de Hoyos said.

But now the new government wants Fonatur to focus exclusively on the Maya Train to the detriment of its other functions, he asserted.

De Hoyos wrote that the CPTM promoted Mexico's destinations to a global audience but pointed out that while the government has taken the decision to disband it, no "new strategy or organization for the tourism promotion of Mexico" has been announced.

"That makes you think that tourism has stopped being a priority," he said.

De Hoyos also highlighted that [no funding has been allocated for Mexico's \*pueblos mágicos\*](#) this year and that international trade and investment agency ProMéxico is "currently closing its offices" without any consideration being given to the contribution it has made to promoting tourism.

"Mexico is destined to be one of the world tourism leaders in the 21st century. Nobody out of ignorance, near-sightedness or prejudice should diminish that potential," he concluded.

Source: *El Economista* (sp)