

## Mexico pledges US \$90 million a year in development aid to Central America

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Opposition leaders called it 'senseless' and out of line with the government's austerity program



President López Obrador has pledged to give US \$90 million a year to Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala to discourage Central American migration through Mexico to the United States with a regional development initiative.

On Saturday, the president signed a letter of intent to cooperate with Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández. Following the signing, Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said the Mexican government will invest \$30 million to create 20,000 jobs in Honduras over the next five months through a reforestation project based on the government's domestic Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life) program and the apprenticeship scheme Youths Building the Future.

The president signed a deal with El Salvador President Nayib Bukele in late June, and Ebrard said the administration would offer the same investment to Guatemala after the second round of the country's presidential elections in August.

But opposition leaders described the move as senseless, claiming that the expenditure is inconsistent with the administration's austerity plan, which has slashed spending across the federal government, laid off government employees and cut many programs.

National Action Party politician Damián Zepeda accused the president of bowing to the United States' immigration agenda to the detriment of the Mexican people.

“Mexico wants to sell an image of itself as being something it's not; the president and his cabinet are out of touch. On one hand, Mexico is accepting an absurd position on the United States' terms for migration, while on the other Mexico wants to solve other countries' problems when it's far from solving its own.”

Zepeda highlighted some of the administration's problematic austerity measures, including a 25% cut in government spending, the dismissal of over 200,000 public servants, the withdrawal of daycare subsidies, incomplete pay for Federal Police and a shortage of medications in the public healthcare system.

Institutional Revolutionary Party lawmakers were in agreement. “They're committing important federal resources when they have said ad nauseam that it's necessary to find savings.”

President López Obrador brushed off the criticisms.

“Of course we are going to participate in this development program for Central America and Mexico, and we are going to do our share, including using our resources. Some are questioning this stance, even to the point of xenophobia.”

Source: [Milenio](#) (sp), [El Financiero](#) (sp)