

Washington pledges billions in aid to limit Central American migration



Mexico City, December 20 (RHC)-- The United States will spend billions of dollars in Central America and Mexico, as part of a plan to officially strengthen economic growth in the region but also aimed at deterring immigrants who want to travel to the United States as they are forced to flee poverty and violence, the U.S. and Mexican governments have announced.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has been seeking to persuade U.S. counterpart Donald Trump to work with Mexico to develop Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, as well as Mexico's poorer south to stem the flow of migrants and asylum-seekers.

Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said the United States is committing \$5.8 billion toward development in Central America. It is also increasing public and private investment in Mexico by \$4.8 billion via the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), \$2 billion of which would go to the south.

Speaking as the U.S. State Department issued a statement setting out the commitments, Ebrard said that the Mexican government had pledged to find \$25 billion to develop the south of the country during the next five years.

“The agreements established here mean more than doubling the foreign investment in the south of Mexico from 2019,” the minister told a news conference in Mexico City.

It was not immediately clear how much of the investment announced represented new funding. A spokesman for Ebrard told Reuters he understood that \$2.5 billion of the pledges to develop Central America were fresh commitments.

All told, the deal between the two presidents represented commitments of \$35.6 billion for Central America and southern Mexico from next year, Ebrard said on Twitter.

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