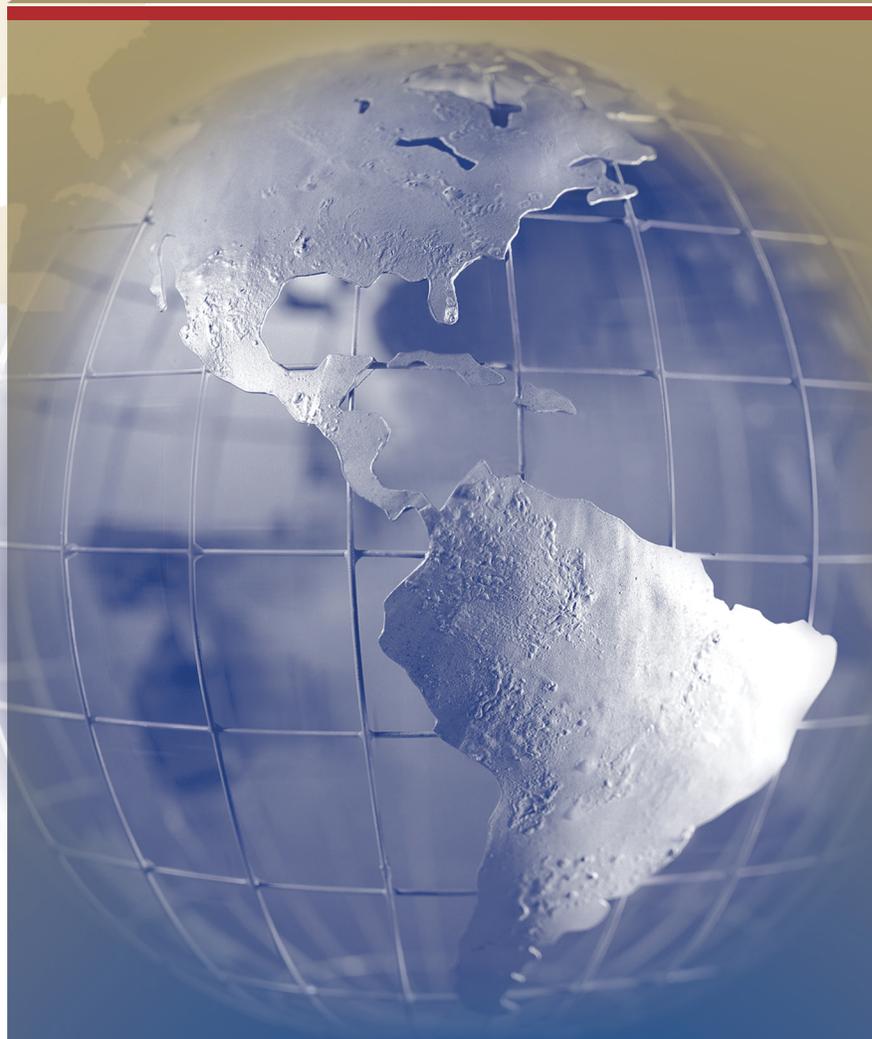




GENERAL ELECTIONS IN MEXICO

JUNE 7<sup>TH</sup> 2015

REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION



Parliamentary Confederation  
of the Americas



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION .....	3
1. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MISSION.....	5
2. COMPOSITION OF THE DELEGATION.....	7
TABLE 2.1: PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MISSION .....	7
3. MISSION ACTIVITIES BEFORE ELECTION DAY.....	9
3.1 Arrival of delegation and accreditation of members.....	9
3.2 Working meetings with representatives of institutions and organizations involved in the electoral process.....	9
3.2.1 Openings session of the program for international visitors.....	10
3.2.2 Working meeting with Amnesty International .....	11
3.2.3 Working meeting with the Centre for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL) .....	12
3.2.4 Working session with four women’s rights groups .....	13
3.2.5 Working meeting with a representative of the Organization of American States (OAS) concerning transmission of the election results.....	15
3.2.6 Working meeting with senior officials of the National Action Party (PAN).....	16
3.2.7 Working meeting with senior official of the New Alliance Party (Nueva Alianza) .....	17
3.2.8 Working meeting with Serapaz .....	18
3.2.9 INE international visitor program: round table with representatives of political parties running for election.....	20
3.2.10 INE program for international visitors: round table in the 2014-2015 electoral process .....	22
4. Mission activities on Election Day .....	25
4.1 Deployment of COPA observers .....	25
4.2 Aspects observed .....	25
5. COPA mission findings.....	27
5.1 Polling stations.....	27
Table 5.1 : observations on polling stations .....	28
5.2 Election materials .....	29
Table 5.2 : observations on election materials.....	29
5.3 The electoral process.....	30
Table 5.3: observations on the electoral process .....	30
5.4 Complaints and irregularities .....	31
Table 5.4: observations on complaints and irregularities .....	31

5.5 Assessment on vote count.....	32
6. Mission conclusions and recommendations.....	33
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	35
Appendix 1: History of COPA’s electoral observation missions.....	37
Appendix 2: Recommendation on dispatching and electoral observation mission to Mexico.....	39
Appendix 3: Invitation from the National Electoral Institute of Mexico (INE).....	41
Appendix 4 : Press release – June 3, 2015.....	43
Appendix 5: Itinerary of Team 1.....	45
Appendix 6 : Itinerary of Team 2.....	47
Appendix 7 : Itinerary of Team 3.....	49
Appendix 8 : Press release – June 8, 2015.....	51

## INTRODUCTION

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Created in 1997, the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) is an interparliamentary body that brings together the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal and federated states, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas.

Its goals include strengthening parliamentary democracy and building a community of the Americas founded on respect for dignity and human rights, peace, democracy, solidarity between peoples, social justice and gender equality.

To achieve these goals and contribute actively to strengthening democracy on the American continent, COPA adopted the *By-Laws of COPA Electoral Observation Missions* in May 2005.

A delegation of six COPA parliamentarians visited Mexico from June 3 to 8, 2015 to observe the general elections held on June 7.

This was COPA's 15th electoral observation mission<sup>1</sup> and its 5th in Mexico. Over the years, these missions have enabled COPA to acquire valuable knowledge and expertise in this field.

This report summarizes the delegation's activities during its visit to Mexico (June 3 to 8, 2015) and includes its main observations on Election Day, June 7. The report is divided into six parts:

- 1) Terms of reference of the mission**
- 2) Composition of the delegation**
- 3) Mission activities before Election Day**
- 4) Mission activities on election day**
- 5) COPA mission findings**
- 6) Mission conclusions and recommendations**

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1. See Appendix 1 for a history of COPA's electoral observation missions since 2005.



## 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MISSION

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At the 13th COPA General Assembly, held from September 3 to 5, 2014 in Asunción, Paraguay, the members of the organization adopted a recommendation<sup>2</sup> on dispatching of an electoral observation mission to Mexico for the general elections of June 7, 2015. On February 17, 2015, COPA President Zulma Ramona Gómez Cáceres (who is also a Senator of the Congress of Paraguay) sent a letter to Mexico's electoral authorities informing them of COPA's willingness and availability to send a parliamentary delegation to Mexico to observe the elections.

The President received a letter<sup>3</sup> dated March 30, 2015 from the National Electoral Institute of Mexico (INE) inviting her to form a delegation of international visitors who would be interested in learning about the mechanics and stages of the electoral process of June 7, 2015.

The President then sent a letter to the members of the COPA Executive Committee in which she called on them to inform their respective parliamentary assemblies of the mission and to recruit parliamentarians to act as observers during the electoral process. A similar letter was sent to COPA regional vice-presidents asking them to mobilize parliamentarians in their respective regions who might be interested in participating in the mission. Finally, a letter was sent to the presidents and speakers of the parliaments of the Americas inviting them to designate parliamentarians who wished to take part.

In a letter dated May 29, 2015, the President informed Mexico's electoral authorities of the composition of the COPA delegation, which would be led by **Richard Merlini**,<sup>4</sup> Member of the National Assembly of Québec.

On June 3, 4, 5 and 6, the delegation members participated in important working meetings with the electoral authorities and political parties registered with the INE, specialists in Mexican politics, representatives of civil society organizations and representatives of inter-American organizations to learn about the electoral process and the situation prevailing in the country on the eve of the elections. The meetings were divided into two programs: one for international visitors, organized by the INE, and one specifically for the COPA delegation.

On Election Day, the observers were deployed in the Federal District and the State of Mexico to observe election operations in some 45 voting centres. This deployment was planned to obtain the most representative sample possible of urban and semi-urban regions.

On January 27, 2015, the INE approved candidates from the following political parties:

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2. See Appendix 2 for the recommendation on dispatching an electoral observation mission.
  3. See Appendix 3 for a copy of the letter of invitation.
  4. As mentioned in the letter, Jean-François Lisée, Member of the Québec National Assembly and Chair of COPA's Committee on Democracy and Peace, was supposed to head the mission, but pressing reasons forced him to withdraw soon after the letter was sent. A number of other parliamentarians also withdrew in the days leading up to the delegation's activities in the field.

1. National Action Party – *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN)
2. Institutional Revolutionary Party – *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI)
3. Democratic Revolution Party – *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD)
4. Workers’ Party – *Partido des Trabajo* (PT)
5. Green Ecological Party of Mexico – *Partido Verde Ecologista de México* (PVEM)
6. Citizens’ Movement – *Movimiento Ciudadano* (MC)
7. New Alliance – *Nueva Alianza*

The 2015 election campaign officially began on Sunday, April 5, 2015 and ended on June 4, 2015<sup>5</sup> at 11:59 p.m. All aspects of the electoral operations were carried out under the supervision of the National Electoral Institute (INE).

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5. Under article 251, paragraph 5 of the Mexican Electoral Code, no one involved in the electoral process may engage in campaign activities in the three days preceding election day.

## 2. COMPOSITION OF THE DELEGATION

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The COPA delegation was led by **Richard Merlini**, Member of the National Assembly of Québec.

Below is the list of the other parliamentarians who participated in the mission.

TABLE 2.1: PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MISSION

NAME	FUNCTION	COUNTRY/STATE	INSTITUTION
<b>Fausto Liz Quiñones</b>	Deputy	Dominican Republic	Central American Parliament
<b>Catherine Lagacé</b>	Electoral Expert Secretary General	Canada (Québec)	Chief Electoral Officer of Québec (DGEQ)
<b>Patrick Giasson</b>	Mission Coordinator International Relations Adviser	Canada (Québec)	National Assembly of Québec
<b>Marie-Christine Ross</b>	Assistant Mission Coordinator International Cooperation Adviser	Canada (Québec)	Chief Electoral Officer of Québec (DGEQ)
<b>Nelson Carela</b>	Adviser	Dominican Republic	Central American Parliament



### 3. MISSION ACTIVITIES BEFORE ELECTION DAY

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#### 3.1 ARRIVAL OF DELEGATION AND ACCREDITATION OF MEMBERS

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On arriving in Mexico on June 3, 2015, the COPA delegation issued a press release<sup>6</sup> announcing the composition of the delegation and purpose of the mission, and briefly introducing COPA.

#### 3.2 WORKING MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

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On June 4, 2015, delegation members took part in the opening session of the INE program for international visitors and in three working meetings with representatives of institutions and organizations involved in the electoral process. They met with Perseo Quiroz Rendón, Executive Director of Amnesty International Mexico, an organization dedicated to defending human rights. To discuss the more technical aspects of the electoral process and electoral planning, they participated in a working meeting with Salvador Romero, Director of the Centre for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL). The members also held working meetings with representatives of four women's rights groups. Some members held a parallel working meeting with the Organization of American States (OAS) to discuss transmission of the Mexican election results.

On June 5, the members met with senior officials from the National Action Party and the New Alliance Party. They were also able to speak with representatives of the peace group Serapaz.

On June 6, they attended two round tables organized by the INE: one with the presidents of six of the ten political parties that are running candidates, the other with five Latin American researchers who analyzed Mexico's political situation in the context of the June 7 elections.

Summaries of the comments made and the information gathered during the meetings are provided below. The opinions expressed are those of the participants, not COPA.

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6. See Appendix 4.

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### 3.2.1 OPENINGS SESSION OF THE PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

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- **Radisson Perisur Hotel**
- **June 4, 2015, 10:00 a.m.**
- **Speakers:**
  - **Ernesto Pinilla, President, Electoral Tribunal of Panama**
  - **Constancio Carrasco, Magistrate, Federal Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Branch (TEPJF)**
  - **Lorenzo Córdova, President, National Electoral Institute of Mexico (INE)**
  - **Santiago Nieto, Director, Electoral Offences Court – *Fiscalía Especializada para la Atención de Delitos Electorales (FEPADE)***

The four speakers discussed Mexico's electoral process. First, Mr. Pinilla pointed out that electoral processes in Latin America have improved considerably in recent decades. He welcomed the electoral reform adopted by Mexico in 2014 and stressed the importance of imposing penalties for electoral offences.

Mr. Carrasco discussed the evolution of right to vote in Mexico in relation to civil and political rights. He pointed out that social rights can be achieved once the right to vote is guaranteed. In his view, Mexico has seen a realignment of civil and political rights, in particular because of the arrival of independent candidates under the reform of 2014. Gender parity in the number of candidates nominated for election, an innovation of the reform, is seen as contributing to the consolidation of civil and political rights and was the result of a process initiated by the FEPADE.

Mr. Córdova, President of the INE, focussed on the 2015 general elections which he felt would be the most complex ever organized in Mexico, due to the large number of elections—mayoral, state and federal—to be held concurrently.

Mr. Carrasco noted that the voters list contained a record number of voters—almost 83.5 million. Close to 148,910 polling stations would be set up in more than 6,000 voting centres, and 210,000 more people would be enlisted as election personnel than in 2010. The INE's efforts to facilitate voting resulted in additional polling stations being set up throughout the country.

Mr. Córdova noted that Mexico's 2014 electoral reform, the most far-reaching the country has ever adopted, involved harmonizing the 33 electoral models in effect in its 32 states and the Federal District. Henceforth, the INE has jurisdiction to intervene in local elections, in particular to train polling station officers, manage voters lists and site polling stations. It also assumes the duties of its predecessor, the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), except violations of the electoral advertising rules, which have been transferred to the FEPADE. All told, the INE has been assigned 74 new duties in addition to those it formerly carried out.

Mr. Carrasco concluded, referring to the difficult context surrounding the elections. Owing to the climate of violence, the INE had to suspend its dispatch of polling station officers to certain high-

risk areas. Mr. Carrasco also mentioned the possibility that some polling stations would not be set up at all.

The final speaker, Mr. Nieto, gave an overview of the FEPADE. Under article 102 of the Mexican Constitution, the FEPADE is a constitutional body that deals with two types of offences: those involving polling station officers and those involving electoral funding. Since October 2014, 1,207 complaints have been filed with the FEPADE.

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### 3.2.2 WORKING MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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- **Royal Pedregal Hotel**
- **June 4, 2015, 12:00 noon**
- **Perseo Quiroz Rendón, Executive Director, Amnesty International Mexico**

Mr. Quiroz essentially described the political and electoral context in Mexico. The country, he said, is literally in the throes of a human rights crisis. While many reforms have resulted in progress on human rights issues, these changes have not been applied in practical terms. Freedom of expression is also a concern, and journalists wishing to denounce certain situations are in real danger.

Mr. Quiroz also touched on the public's disenchantment with politicians and political parties in general. Many voters expressly refrain from voting and others show up at the polls only to invalidate their ballots. This disillusionment is even more pronounced among young people. In addition, voters do not have the tools necessary to enable them to vote. The number of people who exercise their right to vote varies enormously depending on the location. A mere 1% of the population controls 50% of the country's GDP. A portion of the population does not enjoy a sufficiently high standard of living to get to a voting centre. Those who do get there lack the tools (education, information, etc.) necessary to exercise their right to vote. The right to freely run for office has also been flouted: six candidates have been assassinated and, in each instance, the case remains unsolved.

Mexico, said Mr. Quiroz, is experiencing a profound crisis of confidence in addition to a crisis involving its institutions and legal system. Many Mexicans distrust the INE because it has been unable to enforce the law. In this connection, Mr. Quiroz mentioned that the Mexican Green Party had clearly and repeatedly violated the rules in term of election expenses with impunity.

He also touched on the many illegal executions and the large number of "missing" persons. Violence is so common that it has ceased to make the headlines.

Mr. Quiroz concluded, mentioning the important role played by social movements and the social media as a counterweight to the traditional media and the professional political class. He said that he expected to see an abstention rate of approximately 60% in the upcoming elections. He also indicated that potential irregularities were most likely to be observed in certain states—Oaxaca,

Michoacán, Guerrero and Chiapas—and that the elections would probably run smoothly in Mexico’s major cities.

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### 3.2.3 WORKING MEETING WITH THE CENTRE FOR ELECTORAL PROMOTION AND ASSISTANCE (CAPEL)

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- **Radisson Perisur Hotel**
- **June 4, 2015, 1:30 p.m.**
- **Salvador Romero, Director, CAPEL**

Mr. Romero began by briefly presenting CAPEL and its activities. CAPEL reports to the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (UNIORE), which networks Latin American electoral institutes. CAPEL comprises representatives from all countries in the region and is mandated to facilitate electoral planning in the broadest sense. With regard to the June 7 elections, CAPEL played a logistical role with the INE, assessing the redistribution of powers between local and national organizations. It also helped implement the system to monitor political parties’ campaign spending. Real-time monitoring of such spending is part of the 2014 reform. Candidates are required to post their expenses and invoices online within three days of incurring costs. The public has access to the site. The INE’s report on candidate spending must be filed before June 13, 2015, when the Electoral Tribunal makes its final announcement as to the outcome of the election. Mr. Romero noted that campaign financing is essentially public financing: 62% of the amount allocated to each party is based on the results of the previous election, and 38% is a fixed amount.

Mr. Romero also briefly presented the INE, mentioning that it employs 16,000 permanent employees and has a budget of \$1.1 billion US, or \$13.25 US per voter.

CAPEL will deploy 50 observers from Latin American electoral organizations, mostly in the capital city area.

Acknowledging the widespread public disaffection with politics, Mr. Romero predicted a low voter turnout, but one that would vary from region to region depending on whether one or more elections were to be held concurrently. He foresaw a voter turnout of 30% in regions where only federal elections were held, and mentioned that the INE has taken various measures to encourage voter participation.

He maintained that, for the first time in Mexico’s recent history, elections in certain specific regions, such as the state of Guerrero, would face serious threats. Such cases would be isolated, he said, taking the form of blocked highways and polling stations. Some groups in society would seek to take polling stations hostage in an attempt to have their demands met.

Vote buying, he noted, could occur in certain regions, but is largely limited to local and mayoral elections. In some regions, the parties have agreed to run only one candidate in order to prevent the influence of organized crime.

Next, Mr. Romero outlined the election personnel recruitment system, which in Mexico is random in the sense that any citizen may be called upon to work at the voting tables. However, citizens also have the right to refuse. Training is provided by the INE and no compensation is provided for election officials, except for a financial compensation for some people, largely symbolic.

Mr. Romero concluded, touching on the subject of special polling stations, which, according to him, allow people who are outside their district or state at the time of the elections to vote. These stations are allotted a limited number of ballots, and their officers have access to a computerized voters list for the whole country.

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#### 3.2.4 WORKING SESSION WITH FOUR WOMEN'S RIGHTS GROUPS

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- **Royal Pedregal Hotel**
- **June 4, 2015, 3:00 p.m.**
- **Speakers:**
  - **Ximena Andión, Director, Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute**
  - **Brando Flores and Nancy Mejía, National Coordinators of *Redefine México***
  - **Daphne Cuevas Ortiz, Director, and Martha Juarez, *Consortio para el diálogo parlamentario y la equidad***
  - **Marsuia López Cruz, *Asociadas por lo justo***

Ms. Andión began some few general observations on the electoral process in relation to women's issues. According to her, Mexico is presently undergoing a political and social crisis, which is also marked by a far-reaching institutional crisis, given that the political parties represent the interests of the professional political class and not those of ordinary citizens. Recent years have posted close to 25,000 "disappearances" and a growing number of summary executions. Organized crime has infiltrated the State, a fact which contributes to a system based on impunity.

The 2014 electoral reform makes provision for independent candidates. Ms. Andión noted that, while this is certainly progress, in practical terms it is difficult for ordinary citizens to run for election because they lack the means to do so. The 22 independent candidates actually come from the two main political parties; 20 of them are men, and only 2, women.

She went on to note that the requirement for gender parity in nominating electoral candidates applies at all levels of government: federal, municipal and local. Despite these rules, however, genuine parity will not be achieved until social and economic conditions change. Stereotypes and the substantial family responsibilities assumed by women continue to stand in the way of real equality.

Mr. Flores presented the mission of the observatory *Redefine México* and its principal conclusions. This organization concerns itself with the current state of gender equality in Mexico. Its study examines the relative importance of certain key issues for the status of women in political

campaigns and political parties' election platforms. Conspicuously absent are: women's political participation; budgets that take women's issues into account; prevention of all forms of violence against women; remuneration for domestic work; and decriminalization of abortion.

*Redefine México* also assessed other aspects, including the probability, on a regional basis, of a woman winning an election. The highest probability is in the Federal District. According to the observatory's survey of gender-related initiatives taken by politicians, it would seem that gender issues are not a priority.

Ms. López Cruz, of *Asociada por lo justo*, began by citing the important role that electoral observation plays and went on to talk about the electoral process itself. She maintained that Mexico's flawed institutional system slows down any real transition towards democracy.

Next she stressed the importance of the June 7 elections which, though they are midterm elections, will nonetheless bring 500 deputies into office. It is important that people vote in order to counterbalance the situation in Congress. Otherwise the crisis is likely to worsen. Citizen participation is essential to provide a true counterweight, and invalidating one's ballot will not solve anything.

Ms. Cuevas, of *Consortio para el diálogo parlamenarario y la equidad*, talked about the context of violence and disaffection surrounding the elections. She felt that particular attention should be paid where violence occurs and noted that a number of social movements seeking change, notably anarchist movements, were angry. Recently, she said, there had been daily attacks on the INE's local electoral institutes' facilities, proving that the situation is serious. Many groups are calling the entire system into question, including the right to express oneself through elections.

Similarly, according to Mr. Cuevas, the way power is exercised has much to do with public discontent. The public forums that have been created are used mostly by politicians, very often thoughtlessly. People see that politicians do not obey the law or assume their responsibilities. The most obvious example is the case of the 43 students who went missing in Iguala. People feel betrayed. The problem of impunity, she said, contributes very largely to public disaffection.

Ms. Andión provided a further concrete example of the effect of Mexico's flawed institutional system, namely, that certain municipalities are controlled by organized crime and, in some cases, police officers are even on the payroll. This situation grew out of inadequate application of the law, and can only be reversed by increased transparency, accountability and citizen involvement. But the current government is inclined to undercut the efforts of independent institutions mandated to monitor authorities reporting directly to the executive branch. In Mexico, 98% of all crimes go unpunished.

On the subject of possible solutions to this crisis, the speakers brought up the role of civil society and social movements. According to Mr. Flores, civil society has new tools at its disposal with which to ensure better oversight and accountability, in particular through the Internet and social

media—in short, any media not under government control. Ms. Andi3n noted that civil society groups work in silos, which results in “fragmentation” according to their respective causes.

Lastly, Mr. Flores stressed that, in order to assess the degree of impunity, it is important to look closely at what the Electoral Tribunal does after the elections. Some political parties, he said, have clearly broken the rules. He also touched on how the new gender parity rules would find expression in practical terms.

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### 3.2.5 WORKING MEETING WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS) CONCERNING TRANSMISSION OF THE ELECTION RESULTS

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- **Crowne Plaza Hotel**
- **June 4, 2015, 3:00 p.m.**
- **Alex Bravo**

In parallel to the meeting with the women’s groups, some members of the delegation went to the Organization of American States (OAS) electoral observation mission headquarters to meet with Alex Bravo, OAS expert on electoral technology, concerning transmission of the election results.

Mr. Bravo briefly discussed the technical aspects of Mexico’s voters list. To vote, Mexicans must obtain a card with their picture on it (*credencial*). Since the voters list also contains a picture of each registered voter, the picture on the voters list can be compared with the corresponding *credencial*. There are four types of *credencial*.

Once the votes have been counted, transmission of the election results is an important step. In Mexico, election results are transmitted simultaneously in the following three ways:

- The “Conteo rapido”, or quick count, provides a statistical sampling of results. A committee of experts gathers the information directly from election day reports and transmits the results to a control centre. The results are then calculated and transferred to the head of the INE. The sampling is ordinarily available at approximately 11:00 p.m. the night of the vote.
- The Preliminary Election Results Program (PREP) rapidly publishes preliminary results. Close to 1,200 INE employees make the rounds of the voting centres to gather first copies of the election day reports that polling station officers have set aside in envelopes for that purpose and convey them to the CATD (*Centro de acopio y transimisi3n de datos*). The CATD staff scans the report and sends the image to a centre for transcription and cross-checking. These “electronic reports” are then sent via a secure system to a national compilation centre, where they are fed into a comprehensive database from which the final data are ultimately published. The preliminary results are then made available to the INE General Council, posted on the Internet, and distributed to communications media.
- The “Computo distrital” is carried out locally on a district-by-district basis.

For the 2015 elections, the INE has new duties with regard to local elections, in addition to its federal election responsibilities. In this context, close attention must be paid to transmission of the results, in particular as regards the local and federal authorities involved in the process. Some local authorities will be implementing the PREP for the first time. The fact that more candidates are running for election than ever before in Mexican history must also be considered. The INE thus has many responsibilities, including training election workers so that results can be transmitted rapidly and efficiently.

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### 3.2.6 WORKING MEETING WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PARTY (PAN)

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- **PAN headquarters**
- **June 5, 2015, 10:00 p.m.**
- **Speakers:**
  - **Fernando Rodríguez, Federal Deputy and PAN National Council Member**
  - **Francisco Garate, Federal Deputy and PAN National Council Member**
  - **Gómez del Campo, Federal Senator and PAN Federal District President**
  - **Jorge Ocejo Moreno, President of the Christian Democratic Organization of the Americas and former Federal Senator (PAN)**

Mr. Rodríguez began by pointing out that the PAN is the main opposition party in Mexico. He then described the evolution of Mexico's political party system over the past 25 years. Over this time, he said, Mexico's institutional system was significantly strengthened at the federal level, especially with regard to electoral institutions' independence in relation to the executive branch. In certain states, on the other hand, the opposite occurred, with local governors intervening in the business of local electoral institutes. This caused federal deputies to press for some of the powers of these institutes to revert to the INE, which occurred under the 2014 reform. The resulting centralization reassured the PAN, in particular as concerns the appointment of magistrates to local electoral institutes.

Mr. Rodríguez then gave a brief historical overview of his party. The PAN was created in 1939. It has always believed that accession to political power must be achieved by peacefully, through democratic elections. This meant that it took a long time for the PAN to gain power federally. In fact, it only happened after 61 years in opposition. Under President Vicente Fox, the party worked to create an independent civil service as a safeguard against partisan impulses. The State apparatus is now beginning to reap the benefits of this change.

Next, Mr. Garate spoke of the PRI's "authoritarian inclinations" in its current governance of Mexico. The situation, he said, is partly due to the fact the PRI has governed Mexico in an authoritarian manner for almost 70 years. The PAN, on the other hand, has been the driving force

behind the process of democratization, and all the major constitutional, electoral and human rights reforms were initiated and upheld by the PAN, according to him.

Next, he turned to the 2015 electoral process, now that the 2014 electoral reform is to be implemented. He mentioned some of the chief aspects of the reform: gender parity, the role of the media, and monitoring political party funding. The latter, he said, is partly aimed at preventing organized crime from financing political campaigns. Furthermore, the PAN welcomes the fact that every political party will be guaranteed 45 minutes a day in each communications media. In concluding, Mr. Garate referred to the “social tension” in Mexico and noted that corruption is one of the biggest problems. He gave the example of President Peña Nieto, who was involved in a corruption scandal over the construction of a railway line between Mexico City and Querétaro. He felt that if the President is involved, the level of corruption is truly alarming. In addition, the context of social tension, combined with acts of subversion, represents a considerable challenge for electoral authorities attempting to set up polling stations in certain regions. The PAN has always maintained that a political party must play a role in citizenship education, which should be stressed more than is presently the case.

Taking up the theme of citizenship education, Ms. Gómez maintained that the campaign to encourage voter participation lacked creativity on the part of electoral authorities. She mentioned that she is in favour of compulsory voting as a means of countering public apathy. She also said that Mexican authorities are too soft on violence.

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### 3.2.7 WORKING MEETING WITH SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE NEW ALLIANCE PARTY (NUEVA ALIANZA)

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- **Nueva Alianza (NA) headquarters**
- **June 5, 2015, 12:00 noon**
- **Speakers:**
  - **Luis Castro Obregón, President, National Steering Committee, *Nueva Alianza***
  - **Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas, Social Communications Director, National Steering Committee, *Nueva Alianza***

Comparing the context of the 2012 presidential and legislative elections with that of the upcoming elections, Mr. Castro began by mentioning that, of the three campaigns in which he has participated, the 2015 one is easily the most complex and difficult. He was disappointed by the high degree of polarization and the mud-slinging campaigns. Such goings-on, he said, give all politicians a bad name. During the 2012 campaign, people still hoped for change or for maintaining the policies in place. The 2015 campaign, on the other hand, shows that matters have deteriorated. First there is public disenchantment, apathy and disaffection, sometimes leading to outbursts of anger. In some sectors, people have little tolerance for anything linked to politicians and unions. We are seeing the anti-public-administration discourse triumph, and politicians and political parties are primarily to blame.

The 2014 electoral reform, said Mr. Castro, is the result of a deal between the PRI and the PAN. In actual fact, the PAN wanted energy reform, and the PRI, electoral reform. The PAN accepted a part of the reform it did not agree with. The most questionable aspect of the reform is that it discourages a multi-party system in favour of a two-party system, in particular due to the 3% rule. Under this rule any party that does not obtain 3% of the popular vote loses party status in the INE's official registry. Another aspect that has been criticized is that deputies and senators can be re-elected. The public never called for such a measure. Mr. Castro sees it as a change that will favour the big parties. All of these elements have contributed to distancing the public from its representatives.

Mr. Castro spoke of public dissatisfaction being manifested in two converging positions, both contrary to democracy. The first position is that of certain radical groups wishing to prevent the elections from taking place. These groups use threats to have their demands heard, be they legitimate or not. Then there is the politically correct position of commentators and university professors who advocate vote spoiling as a way of rebuking politicians. The two positions converge, said Mr. Castro, and sabotage democracy. Elections are the time to reprimand or commend politicians, and ballot invalidation amounts to the refusal to make a decision.

According to Mr. Castro, outbursts of violence are not directly related to the upcoming elections, but result from a problem of governance.

On the subject of his party, Mr. Castro noted that *Nueva Alianza* is considered the first party to arrive on the scene after the advent of democracy in 2000. Formed by part of the progressive wing that existed in the PRI before 2003, the *Nueva Alianza* is, above all, a liberal, reformist party. It ran candidates for the first time in 2006.

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### 3.2.8 WORKING MEETING WITH SERAPAZ

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- **Serapaz headquarters**
- **June 5, 2015, 3:00 p.m.**
- **Speakers:**
  - **Miguel Álvarez Gándara, President**
  - **Dolores González Saravia, Coordinator for the Positive Transformation of Conflicts**
  - **Rocio Eslava**
  - **Manuela Arancibia, Head of Communications**

Ms. Eslava outlined Mexico's social and economic situation, raising the following points: GDP was up 2.1% in 2014 and 1.4% in 2013; in recent years the minimum wage has increased an average of 0.3% annually; poor families are barely able to buy enough food; according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 60% of the population lives under the poverty line.

Ms. González felt that the country finds itself serious situation due to causes that fall into two categories: economic causes and violence-related causes. Wages are unstable, and more than half the economy is informal. This means that organized crime has a strong influence on the labour force. Some workers are forced to work in illegal activities. Organized crime is involved in many sectors of the economy, including mining.

Violence, insecurity, and lack of access to justice contribute to escalating violence. Since 2007, when the army became involved in fighting drug trafficking, there have been more than 100,000 homicides. Some areas are seeing the emergence of self-defence groups. Social and political conditions are extremely volatile.

In many cases, organized crime selects the candidates in local elections. It is also responsible for the assassination of candidates. In 2013, 32 mayors were assassinated. According to Ms. Eslava, 98% of crimes committed in Mexico do not result in sentencing, and almost 75% are never reported for fear of reprisals and lack of confidence in public authorities.

Mr. Álvarez maintained that there is too little debate about the profound nature of the crisis. Some say the crisis can be traced back to the lack of a collective project; others that it is a crisis of the State; still others that it is due to the nature of the political system itself and the way political power is managed. The political parties often feel that they alone hold political power. Some argue that the problem is an economic one because Mexico has become an “outsourcing” nation, or that lack of education is the culprit. In any case, according to Mr. Álvarez there is little agreement as to the diagnosis.

Serapaz does not take a stand on the diagnosis itself. According to Mr. Álvarez, the upcoming elections are unique in the sense that a crisis constitutes their backdrop.

Not only NGOs, but the population in general, are in a permanent state of mobilization. Civil society has become the seed bed for citizen mobilization. New legislative provisions have undermined certain fundamental freedoms, including freedom to demonstrate and freedom of association. Freedom of speech is also threatened, and Mexico is one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists.

As for solutions to the crisis, Mr. Álvarez would like to see more unity among civil society groups. While there are certainly tendencies in that direction, they have yet to find their full expression.

On the subject of violence, Mr. Álvarez noted that social struggles in Mexico seem to take the form of armed violence. The country currently has 42 guerilla movements.

Taking up the question of violence, Ms. González mentioned the severe damage being done to the social fabric and even to family relationships. A study has shown that, in some regions, people have stopped visiting their families out of fear. Some even mistrust their own family members.

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### 3.2.9 INE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM: ROUND TABLE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF POLITICAL PARTIES RUNNING FOR ELECTION

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- **Radisson Perisur Hotel**
- **June 6, 2015, 10:00 a.m.**
- **The political parties represented were:**
  - **National Action Party (PAN)**
  - **Democratic Revolution Party (PRD)**
  - **Workers' Party (PT)**
  - **Green Ecological Party of Mexico (PVEM)**
  - **Citizens' Movement (MC)**
  - **New Alliance (PANAL)**

This session was moderated by Manuel Carrillo, Director of the INE's International Affairs Branch. Representatives from 10 political parties<sup>7</sup> were invited to give their impressions, in three minutes, of the 2014 reform in the context of the upcoming elections.

After presenting the origin of their parties, the representatives highlighted what they considered to be the key aspects of the reform. The new gender-equality rules were cited repeatedly, as were the problems of corruption and voter participation. A number of the representatives cited public confidence and institutional fragility as challenges to be met.

The PAN representative began by recalling that the party's objective, since its creation in 1939, has been to ensure free elections. He pointed out that the progress made possible by the electoral reforms of 1997, 1998 and 1990 has resulted in a system of proportional representation in the Chamber of Deputies and a single electoral map. As important aspects of the 2014 reform, he cited the gender parity rules for nominating candidates, which give women real access to elected positions, and the political party financing rules designed to weed out corrupt sources of funding. Among the challenges that remain to be met are the low voter turnout (40%) and the presence of groups intent on preventing the elections from taking place.

The PRD representative began by mentioning that his party has been on the left of the political spectrum since its creation 26 years ago. One of the problems Mexico faces is the absence of economic programs to fight social inequality and poverty. States such as Chiapas and Michoacán are cause for particular concern, and it is up to the government to ensure that elections are free and safe. With regard to voter participation and citizen involvement, he wondered whether people are really satisfied with the current model and whether the reform allowing for independent candidates is in fact competitive. He reiterated his confidence in the reform, and hopes to see the elections unfold calmly. In terms of political party financing, the PRD is concerned with what it

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7. No representative from the PRI, the MORENA, the Encuentro Social or the Humanist Party (PH) was part of the round table.

sees as the serious problem of vote buying. The PRD representative believes the problem will continue unless more power is given to the INE to guarantee its independence. He wondered whether the centralization of electoral responsibilities is the right solution, and advocated penalties for violations of electoral law. He stressed the importance of open, free elections. Lastly, he pointed to the existence of a vote buying scheme during the 2012 elections, and now he pins his hopes on the new electoral funding rules.

The PT representative characterized his party as a socialist party. It was created in 1990 and has been running candidates since 1994. He pointed out that, despite being a minority party, the PT has endured. The political system is biased, however, and it is difficult for the smaller political parties to survive. The recent reform partly corrects this situation by ensuring that all the political parties have the same amount of free media broadcast time. Gender parity in the nomination of candidates is also an important step. The PT representative concluded, saying that while the Electoral Code and the Constitution look good on paper, they have not been implemented in concrete terms. The PT hopes that people will turn up at the polls and vote for the candidates they truly prefer.

The PVEDM believes that the current context is problematic and that conditions must be created to ensure that voters are fully free to vote in a non-violent climate. Public confidence in society's institutions represents a real challenge in building a strong democracy. At the moment, these institutions remain fragile. In addition, the electoral system is highly unfair, and the structure of the political party system must be changed.

The MC representative, appointed in 2011, began by mentioning that the current climate of violence is not normal. According to the MC, voters lack information. The INE's efforts have been insufficient to ensure widespread voter participation. This includes Mexico's Native peoples, who are demanding better living conditions. The INE and the State will have to make an effort to guarantee the safety of candidates—including Native candidates—and monitor abuses of power.

The PANAL representative characterized his party as a reformist party. For the past 10 years, he has been campaigning for rights and freedoms to be genuinely enforced. The PANAL maintains that it has been fined less frequently than any other party. It strives for transparency, posting all its spending on its web page. It sees the electoral reform as complicated, incomplete, and as having been achieved through an agreement between the PAN and the PRI conditional on the government's approval of an energy reform package. The prevailing two-party system, the PANAL representative said, undermines political plurality. Lastly, he mentioned the problems involved in monitoring freedom of speech.

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### 3.2.10 INE PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS: ROUND TABLE IN THE 2014-2015 ELECTORAL PROCESS

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- **Radisson Perisur Hotel**
- **June 6, 2015, 11:30 a.m.**
- **Participants:**
  - **Daniel Zovatto, Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Branch, IDEA International**
  - **Pedro Salazar, Director, Law Research Institute, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)**
  - **Soledad Loaeza, Mexican Researcher, Colegio de Mexico**
  - **Roy Campos, Director General, Consulta Mitofsky**

Round table moderator Flavia Freidenberg is a researcher at the Instituto de Iberoamérica of the University of Salamanca, in Spain. The purpose of the round table was to get academics' perspectives on the elections and on Mexico's political context. By and large, the participants were highly critical of Mexico's democratic institutions, in particular its political party system.

Although a new electoral law and a series of reforms were implemented in recent years, the participants see the problem as going deeper. The INE, with its 74 new responsibilities, cannot be blamed. The political parties are at fault. Mexico is a "particracy", not a democracy. Political parties must act on the rules they have set and genuinely commit themselves to fighting poverty and corruption.

Mr. Campos, Director of the polling firm Mitofsky, got things started by presenting a detailed overview of voter intentions for the three elections to be held on June 7.

Using voter trend chart data, Mr. Campos focussed on three main questions: Would the PRI or the PAN receive the most votes? Which party would win the most seats in the Chamber of Deputies (with or without a coalition)? On the local level, with more than 1,500 positions to be filled, what would be the trend in States where the election is played out between the two main parties?

On the national level, the main question according to Mr. Campos is whether the PRI, and consequently President Peña Nieto, is able to obtain a majority in the Chamber of Deputies in order to maintain stability and lead the country into the general and presidential elections of 2018.

Mr. Campos mentioned that his firm's polls also show that another issue is vote spoiling: 5.4% of the ballots were invalidated in the 2009 elections, the sign of a disaffected public.

Next, Soledad Loaeza of the Colegio de Mexico said she had a "darker" view of the upcoming elections. Despite their being midterm elections, they were nonetheless among the six to eight most crucial elections in Mexico's history. Moreover, a massive change seems to be in the offing with regard to people's voting habits.

According to Ms. Loaeza, Mexico is confronted with a population that has become disillusioned with its democratic institutions. If people turn out to vote, the message they will be sending is that, on the contrary, they have faith in these institutions. As well, the elections have been marked by appeals for a voter boycott. In her view, these appeals were caused directly by the recent corruption scandals, which have bred dissatisfaction in a population made cynical by fact that such crimes go unpunished. The appeals sometimes also have deeper causes and represent an antidemocratic offensive by certain groups. Mexico's present tensions have more significant repercussions than is generally admitted.

She concluded, highlighting the authoritarian, corporatist legacy of the parties in power, which do not really believe in elections. Only a real agreement between the stakeholders could change things; without it, this legacy will continue.

Next, Pedro Salazar stressed that current tensions run deep and have existed for a very long time. For many reasons, social tensions and political and criminal violence have worsened in recent years. The 2014 reform amplifies this context and adds to the elections' complexity. Mr. Salazar feels that it was an error to centralize the INE, because this has made election planning much more difficult and has changed local and regional problems into national ones.

Moreover, in his view, certain technical aspects of political party financing have complicated the situation. Many offences, including overspending, were brought before the Tribunal during the campaign, but impunity has reigned.

Another problem, and a sign of irresponsibility of the part of electoral intuitions according to Mr. Salazar, is that the Electoral Tribunal should comprise seven magistrates but currently only has six. The Tribunal will be required to interpret the new laws implemented under the 2014 reform and make rulings on election offences without a seventh magistrate. The even number of magistrates complicates the Tribunal's task and could delay many cases. Mr. Salazar cited the violations of electoral law that the Green Party, quite willing to pay the applicable fines, knowingly and voluntarily committed. Such actions fuel public disaffection and increase the likelihood of ballot invalidation, which has been a key issue for some months. The youth vote is particularly affected.

Lastly, Mr. Zovatto noted that there are very few midterm elections in Latin America and that Mexico is an exception in this regard. The time leading up to the 2018 elections is likely to be very long indeed for the current president unless he obtains a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. Mr. Neito has a busy legislative agenda in addition to the recent reforms, and the Chamber of Deputies will have to adopt a budget. Hence, the upcoming elections herald a new series of challenges for the government.

Mr. Zovatto also announced that, for the first time in years in Latin America, law enforcement personnel will be on hand to ensure that the elections run smoothly.

Mr. Zovatto ended highlighting that, over and above Mexico's issues of security and the actual election results, is the complex question of the enormous gap that exists between the political parties' responsibilities, as set out in the rules, and their actual conduct. However one chooses to account for this situation—the prevailing political culture, the impunity/corruption crisis, or the economic and social crisis—one of the biggest problems remains the political party system. Mexico's substantial socio-economic inequalities must be addressed in the context of a true democracy. Therein lies the political responsibility of its political parties, concluded Mr. Zovatto.

## 4. MISSION ACTIVITIES ON ELECTION DAY

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### 4.1 DEPLOYMENT OF COPA OBSERVERS

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On Election Day, the members of the mission were grouped into three teams of observers:

1. The first team, comprising a parliamentarian from the Dominican Republic, **Fausto Liz Quiñones**, and the Assistant Mission Coordinator, **Marie-Christine Ross**, observed operations in 33 polling stations in the municipalities of Benito Juárez and Coyoacán.<sup>8</sup>
2. The second team, comprising an adviser from the Dominican Republic, **Nelson Carela**, and the Electoral Expert, **Catherine Lagacé**, observed operations in 23 polling stations in the municipalities of Cuauhtémoc, Iztacalco, Venustiano Carranza and Coyoacán.<sup>9</sup>
3. The third team, comprising a parliamentarian from Québec, who was also the Mission Head, **Richard Merlini**, and the Mission Coordinator, **Patrick Giasson**, observed operations in 32 polling stations in the municipalities of Alvaro Obregón and Tlanepantla de Baz.<sup>10</sup>

### 4.2 ASPECTS OBSERVED

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To help them perform their work as observers, the participants received two electoral observation grids (one for the electoral process and one for the vote count) prepared by the Secretariat of the COPA Committee on Democracy and Peace in collaboration with the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec. The first grid, a copy of which was completed for each polling station observed, is divided into five parts and is based on the provisions of the Mexican Electoral Code. It covers the following aspects of the electoral process:

1. General information on the observer, the voting centre and the polling station
2. The polling station
3. Election materials
4. The electoral process
5. Complaints and irregularities.

The second grid, a copy of which was completed for the last polling station visited, where the vote count was observed, is divided into two parts and is based on the provisions of the Mexican Electoral Code. It covers the following aspects of the vote count:

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8. See Appendix 5 for the itinerary of team 1.

9. See Appendix 6 for the itinerary of team 2.

10. See Appendix 7 for the itinerary of team 3.

1. Assessment of vote count
2. Complaints and irregularities.

To collect this information, the observers talked mainly to the returning officers, the representatives of political parties and the electors at each polling station.

The three teams sought to obtain a representative sample of voting practices by visiting polling stations in a cross-section of neighbourhoods. Hence, in the Federal District and in the State of Mexico, they visited polling stations located in working-class, middle-class and more well-to-do neighbourhoods.

## 5. COPA MISSION FINDINGS

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The main observation findings concern the following aspects:

- Polling stations
- Election materials
- Complaints and irregularities
- General observations.<sup>11</sup>

### 5.1 POLLING STATIONS

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Most of the polling stations observed were adequate as to site and set-up. However, some observers noted problems with set-up, in particular at the following stations:

- section 0370 (Coyoacán, DF)
- section 1697 (Iztacalco, DF)
- section 4902 (Cuauhtémoc, DF)
- section 5221 (Venustiano Carranza, DF)
- section 5304 (Venustiano Carranza, DF)
- section 5263 (Venustiano Carranza, DF)
- section 4377 (Benito Juárez, DF)
- section 4321 (Benito Juárez, DF)
- section 4371 (Benito Juárez, DF)
- section 4391 (Benito Juárez, DF).

Problems noted by observers included insufficient space, difficult access for persons with reduced mobility, insufficient light, and the fact that some polling stations were set up outside. Space constraints sometimes meant that voting booths were far too close to each other, a situation that could compromise ballot secrecy.

Political party representatives were observed to be present in all but six polling stations.

At 18 polling stations, not all election personnel reported for work, and, in some cases, replacements were recruited from the voters' waiting lines. The presence of untrained personnel increases the likelihood of problems with regard to electoral procedures.

At almost all the polling stations observed, voters who arrived early could not vote at the scheduled opening time of 8 a.m. stipulated in article 210.4, paragraph 2 of the Electoral Code. In cases where election personnel arrived late or not at all, there tended to be a delay in setting up

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11. These findings reflect the comments of the COPA delegation members.

the polling stations. When personnel failed to report at all, there were significant delays. Six polling stations opened more than one and a half hours after the scheduled opening time. The polling stations in section 4851, in the municipality of Tlanepantla de Baz, State of Mexico, opened at 11:14 p.m., more than three hours after opening time. Some voters went home rather than wait. According to the observers' information, the majority of the election personnel did not report for work at this voting centre.

For the most part, voting went smoothly, in a calm, orderly fashion. However, it was more disorderly at polling stations that opened late, in particular the polling stations in sections 0393 (*Coyoacán, DF*) and 4396 (*Benito Juárez, DF*).

Table 5.1 summarizes the mission's observations for section 2 of the observation grid.

TABLE 5.1 : OBSERVATIONS ON POLLING STATIONS

**Section 2: Polling Stations**

	YES	NO
Suitable/accessible polling station site and set-up	61	13
Presence of candidate/party representatives	55	6
Presence of election advertising	11	50
Presence of all election personnel	43	18
Polling station open at 8:00 a.m.	2	59
Presence of unauthorized persons	5	56
Presence of national and/or international observers	9	52

## 5.2 ELECTION MATERIALS

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Few problems were observed with regard to election materials. However, in 27 polling stations, the ballot boxes were not properly sealed with tape.

In addition, at the polling stations in section 4987 (*Tlanepantla de Baz, State of Mexico*), the voting booths had no covers. At the same voting centre, one ballot box was damaged. There were not enough tables at the voting centre in section 4982 (*Tlanepantla de Baz, State of Mexico*) and not enough curtains for the voting booths at the voting centre in section 4964 (*Tlanepantla de Baz, State of Mexico*). The indelible ink at the voting centre in section 0370 (*Coyoacán, DF*) was defective.

Despite these few incidents, the observers agreed that election materials were generally in suitable condition.

Table 5.2 summarizes the mission's observations for section 3 of the observation grid.

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TABLE 5.2 : OBSERVATIONS ON ELECTION MATERIALS

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### Section 3: Election Materials

	YES	NO
All required materials ready at opening time	59	2
Numbered ballots in sufficient quantity	61	0
Sealed ballot boxes	44	27
Voting booths ensuring ballot secrecy	61	0
Presence of voters' lists	61	0

### 5.3 THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

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Overall, the electoral process went smoothly at the polling stations observed. On average, voters waited three to five minutes to vote. However, waiting time was particularly long at the following voting centres:

- section 0393 (Coyoacán, DF), wait of more than one hour
- section 4902 (Cuauhtémoc, DF), wait of more than one hour
- section 5221 (Venustiano Carranza, DF), wait of more than one hour
- section 5263 (Venustiano Carranza, DF), wait of more than one hour
- section 5276 (Venustiano Carranza, DF), wait of more than one hour
- section 5284 (Venustiano Carranza, DF), wait of more than one hour
- section 1697 (Iztacalco, DF), wait of 2 hours and 45 minutes
- section 4851 (Tlanepantla de Baz, State of Mexico), wait of 3 hours and 15 minutes.

The observers noted that the election personnel's work was adequate, provided the full contingent reported for work. Problems were often due to insufficient personnel or the fact that replacements were chosen from among people waiting to vote.

Table 5.3 summarizes the mission's observations for section 4 of the observation grid.

TABLE 5.3: OBSERVATIONS ON THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

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#### Section 4: Electoral Process

	YES	NO
Adequate voter identification procedure	61	0
Election personnel compliance with procedures	61	0
Voter compliance with procedures	61	0
Voter understanding of procedures	61	0
Orderly conduct of voting	61	0
Respect for ballot secrecy	61	
Acts of intimidation directed at voters or election personnel	0	61
Interruption in voting during the day	1	60

## 5.4 COMPLAINTS AND IRREGULARITIES

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Some voters complained about the excessively long waiting times, in particular at voting centres in sections 1697 (*Iztacalco, DF*), 4851 (*Tlanepantla de Baz, State of Mexico*) and 0393 (*Coyoacán, DF*). One voter complained about the lack of information on the location of the voting centre in section 4391 (*Benito Juárez, DF*).

Political party representatives filed the following complaints: at the special polling station in section 4391 (*Benito Juárez, DF*), there was insufficient information as to who was qualified to vote; at the voting centre in section 0370 (*Coyoacán, DF*), there was election advertising near the polling stations; and at the voting centre in section 1679 (*Iztacalco, DF*), some polling station officers were absent.

In the category of minor irregularities, six complaints were filed about voting beginning late. Also, at the voting station in section 4851 (*Tlanepantla de Baz, State of Mexico*), ballots were placed in the wrong ballot box.

Lastly, a political party representative filed a complaint about vote buying at the voting centre in section 5304 (*Venustiano Carranza, DF*). As this irregularity was not directly observed, COPA is merely reporting the representative's complaint.

Table 5.4 summarizes the mission's observations for section 4 of the observation grid.

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TABLE 5.4: OBSERVATIONS ON COMPLAINTS AND IRREGULARITIES

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### Section 5: Complaints and Irregularities

	YES	NO	Specify (subject)
Complaints filed by voters	4	57	
Complaints filed by candidates or political party representatives	3	58	
Minor irregularities	10	51	
Serious irregularities	1	60	

## 5.5 ASSESSMENT ON VOTE COUNT

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COPA observers witnessed the vote count at the voting centres in sections 0370 (*Coyoacán, DF*), 3430 (*Alvaro Obregón, DF*) and 0393 (*Coyoacán DF*). Vote counting was rigorous, calm, transparent and conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Code. No major anomalies were observed. COPA observers would like to congratulate the election organizers for their efficiency in compiling the results.

The observers noted the presence of political party representatives in most of the polling stations observed during the vote count. However, they witnessed no formal complaints about the vote count. Some members of the delegation were concerned about how close the voting tables were to certain political party representatives and, at the voting centre in section 0393 (*Coyoacán, DF*), some political party representatives were seen marking unused ballots.

Unfortunately, COPA observers were not able to witness transmission of the results from the polling stations to the INE.

## 6. MISSION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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On completing the observation mission, COPA delegation members noted that the voting process had occurred in a calm environment, that the electoral rules in force had generally been respected, and that most international standards for democratic elections had been upheld.

They were impressed by the sense of civic responsibility and earnestness displayed by citizens and the quality of the work done by election personnel during the election. Delegation members issued a press release<sup>12</sup> to highlight Mexicans' respect for their institutions and the peaceful environment in which the election had been held.

This was the 4th COPA observation mission sent to Mexico to observe a federal election. Previous missions were sent in 2006 for the presidential and legislative elections, in 2009 for the legislative election, and in 2012 for the presidential and legislative elections. Following the last mission, recommendations were made to the Mexican election authorities to improve operations on election day, including the following:

1. Allow polling stations to be set up before 8:00 a.m. so that voters can actually start voting as soon as stations open, giving them more time to exercise their right to vote.
2. Allow voters to cast their ballot at an advance poll if they anticipate being absent from their district on voting day in order to avoid long lines and jostling at special polling stations.
3. Ban the taking of photos in the polling station.

Based on the observations made during the June 7, 2015 election, we note that recommendation 1 was implemented. In the polling stations observed, the personnel began setting up at 7:30 a.m. However, this measure was not sufficient to avoid delays at a number of polling stations.

The other two recommendations were not implemented. However, the COPA delegation noted far fewer problems at the special polling stations. Members of the COPA delegation wish to underline the INE's efforts to set up such polling stations to make it easier for people to exercise their right to vote. Nonetheless, it would be helpful to allow voters to vote in advance, because many of those who went to the special polling stations were unable to vote. In addition, the voter eligibility rules should be clearer or, at least, the election personnel should be able to provide the necessary information.

Regarding recommendation 3, COPA is aware of the challenges involved in controlling picture taking, in particular in the voting booth. Consequently, the delegation has not reiterated this recommendation.

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12. See Appendix 8 for the final press release.

Based on the mission, the COPA delegation would like to make the following recommendations:

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

***Diversify the voting conditions for voters outside the district.***

Various options could be considered, including increasing the number of special polling stations.

In addition, many countries offer the possibility of advance voting. Implementing this option would boost participation rates, making it easier for voters to exercise their right if they are absent from their district or are unable to vote on Election Day.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

***Implement financial, tax or other incentives to guarantee the presence and punctuality of election personnel.***

A number of polling stations opened late because the election personnel arrived late or not at all. Delegates therefore recommend that measures be considered to ensure the election personnel's presence and punctuality.

The members of the delegation would like to thank the INE for the information sessions it organized for international visitors and for the readiness with which its staff answered questions from COPA delegates.

Finally, the delegation members would like to express their appreciation for the warm reception they received from the representatives of the institutions and organizations involved in the electoral process during the working meetings preceding Election Day, as well as from citizens and election workers during visits to polling stations.

## APPENDIX

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## APPENDIX 1: HISTORY OF COPA'S ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSIONS

<b>Country</b>	<b>Polling day</b>	<b>Election type</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	June 7, 2015	<b>General</b>
<b>Paraguay</b>	April 21, 2013	<b>General</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	July 1, 2012	<b>Presidential and legislative</b>
<b>State of Mexico</b>	July 3, 2011	<b>State governor</b>
<b>Colombia</b>	May 30, 2010	<b>Presidential (1st round)</b>
<b>Bolivia</b>	December 6, 2009	<b>General (early)</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	July 5, 2009	<b>Legislative</b>
<b>El Salvador</b>	March 16, 2009	<b>Presidential (2nd round)</b>
<b>Paraguay</b>	April 20, 2008	<b>General</b>
<b>Argentina</b>	October 28, 2007	<b>Presidential and legislative</b>
<b>Guatemala</b>	September 9, 2007	<b>Presidential and legislative (1st round)</b>
<b>Nicaragua</b>	November 5, 2006	<b>Presidential and legislative</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	October 1, 2006	<b>Presidential and legislative (1st round)</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	July 2, 2006	<b>Presidential and legislative</b>
<b>Bolivia</b>	<b>December 18, 2005</b>	<b>Presidential and legislative</b>



## APPENDIX 2: RECOMMENDATION ON DISPATCHING AND ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION TO MEXICO

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### PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS

#### 13th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY  
NOVEMBER 3 TO 5, 2014

#### Recommendation on dispatching an electoral observation mission to Mexico

**WHEREAS** legislative, municipal and state governor elections are to be held in Mexico on June 7, 2015;

**WHEREAS** the participation of parliamentarians from COPA in multilateral electoral observation missions is a matter of priority in order to attain COPA's objective of contributing to strengthening parliamentary democracy and building a community of the Americas founded on respect for human rights and dignity, peace, democracy, solidarity among peoples, social justice, and equity between women and men; and

**WHEREAS** these elections in Mexico are particularly significant for the community of the Americas;

**WE, the representatives of the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal and federated states, regional parliaments, and interparliamentary organizations gathered in Asunción, Paraguay, for the 13th General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas;**

**DECLARE** our support for and solidarity with the Mexican people and the democratic institutions of that country in organizing elections on June 7, 2015;

**PROPOSE** dispatching a COPA electoral observation mission to these elections in Mexico, with due respect for this country's national sovereignty;

**PLEDGE** to uphold the principles of regional balance and political pluralism in forming a delegation of parliamentarians from the Americas, and to make sure that the observation mission carries out its task in an independent, impartial manner as stipulated in the By-laws of COPA Electoral Observation Missions.

2011-08-04



## APPENDIX 3: INVITATION FROM THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL INSTITUTE OF MEXICO (INE)



INSTITUTO FEDERAL ELECTORAL

INSTITUTO NACIONAL ELECTORAL  
COORDINACIÓN DE ASUNTOS INTERNACIONALES

Oficio No. INE/CAI/149/2015

Ciudad de México, a 30 de marzo de 2015

SEN. ZULMA RAMONA GÓMEZ CÁCERES  
PRESIDENTA  
CONFERENCIA PARLAMENTARIA DE LAS AMÉRICAS  
P R E S E N T E

Como es de su conocimiento, el próximo 7 de junio más de 82 millones mexicanos seremos convocados a las urnas a fin de elegir a los 500 Diputados que integran la Cámara baja del Congreso Federal. Adicionalmente, en 17 entidades elegirán a diversas autoridades locales, incluyendo a 9 gobernadores.

Al respecto, ejerciendo las facultades que le otorga la legislación al Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE) como máxima autoridad en materia de administración de elecciones del Estado mexicano, y con el propósito de brindar las mayores facilidades a los ciudadanos extranjeros interesados en conocer de primera mano las diferentes actividades relacionadas con las elecciones en México, su Consejo General, máximo órgano de dirección, aprobó el *Acuerdo por el que se establecen las bases y criterios con que habrá de invitar, atender e informar a los visitantes extranjeros que acudan a conocer las modalidades del proceso electoral federal 2014-2015*. La principal intención de esta resolución es que los miembros de la comunidad internacional, que así lo deseen, puedan acreditarse y estar presentes en todas y cada una de las fases y etapas del proceso electoral referido.

Tomando en cuenta que la Conferencia Parlamentaria de las Américas (COPA) ha participado en elecciones federales mexicanas previas, en nombre del Consejero Presidente, Dr. Lorenzo Córdova Vianello, deseamos turnar la presente invitación para que participe nuevamente con una delegación de visitantes extranjeros de los comicios en curso.

Anexo me permito remitir a usted la resolución citada, incluyendo la Convocatoria y el formato de acreditación respectivos, con el propósito de que aquellos miembros del organismo a su digno cargo, con nacionalidad diferente a la mexicana, interesados en venir a nuestro país para presenciar el desarrollo de la elección en curso, puedan cumplir con los trámites correspondientes para acreditarse como visitante extranjero. Sobra señalar que se trata de documentación de carácter público, por lo que puede ser compartida con cualquier interesado.

Para el caso de que la COPA considere acompañar a este Instituto en el desarrollo de los comicios referidos, manifestamos a usted nuestra disposición por ofrecer nuevamente información a la delegación correspondiente, con base en los lineamientos legales aplicables. Paralelamente, tal y como ha ocurrido en elecciones previas, cada organización será responsable de la financiación de sus respectivas misiones.

Tanto para recibir la documentación para solicitar acreditaciones, como para atender cualquier comentario, ponemos a sus órdenes el correo electrónico [visitantes\\_extranjeros@ife.org.mx](mailto:visitantes_extranjeros@ife.org.mx).

Encuentro propicia la ocasión para enviar a usted un respetuoso saludo.

ATENTAMENTE



MANUEL CARRILLO POBLANO  
COORDINADOR

C. c. p. DR. LORENZO CÓRDOVA VIANELLO, CONSEJERO PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO GENERAL.





### **COPA delegation to observe the Mexican general elections of June 7**

**Mexico, June 3, 2015** – A **Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA)** delegation arrived today in Mexico to observe the June 7 general elections. Member of the National Assembly of Québec Richard Merlini is leading the electoral observation mission, which will be on site from June 3 to June 8.

Parliamentarians from the National Assembly of Quebec, Canada, the Parliament of Central America and the National Assembly of Haiti, an electoral expert from the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec and six advisers will take part in the mission.

Invited by Mexico's National Electoral Institute (INE) as an international electoral observer, the COPA delegation will cover polling station operations on election day in the area of the capital, Mexico City.

The delegation will also meet with key actors in the electoral process. The presidents of political parties, the heads of public bodies, as well as civil society organizations and international organizations will be among those consulted by the COPA delegation. Following the mission, the delegation will present a report on its observations to the Mexican electoral authorities and to COPA authorities.

This is the 15th such mission for COPA. By playing an increasingly active role in election monitoring throughout the Americas, COPA has established its strategic importance in consolidating democracy. COPA was also an observer at Mexico's July 1, 2012 presidential and legislative elections, July 5, 2009 legislative elections and July 2, 2006 presidential and legislative elections.

Founded in Québec City in 1997, the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas brings together over 300 parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal and federated states, as well as the regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas. For additional information on previous COPA electoral observation missions, please go to [www.copa.qc.ca](http://www.copa.qc.ca).

- 30 -

#### **Source and information:**

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## APPENDIX 5: ITINERARY OF TEAM 1

Municipality/ neighbourhood	District	Section	Polling station	Arrival time	Departure time
Coyoacán	23	0393	Básica	7:45 a.m.	9:30 a.m.
Coyoacán	23	0393	Contigua	7:45 a.m.	9:30 a.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4506	Básica	9:55 a.m.	10:15 a.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4506	Contigua	9:55 a.m.	10:15 a.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4519	Básica	10:30 a.m.	10:40 a.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4519	Contigua 1	10:30 a.m.	10:40 a.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4519	Contigua 2	10:30 a.m.	10:40 a.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4494	Básica	12:05 p.m.	12:15 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4494	Contigua	12:05 p.m.	12:15 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4399	Básica	12:10 p.m.	12:55 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4399	Contigua 1	12:10 p.m.	12:55 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4399	Contigua 2	12:10 p.m.	12:55 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4391	Básica	1:00 p.m.	1:25 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4391	Contigua	1:00 p.m.	1:25 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4396	Especial	1:30 p.m.	1:45 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4389	Básica	1:55 p.m.	2:10 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4389	Contigua 1	1:55 p.m.	2:10 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4389	Contigua 2	1:55 p.m.	2:10 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4371	Básica	2:25 p.m.	2:45 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4371	Contigua	2:25 p.m.	2:45 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4351	Básica	3:40 p.m.	3:55 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4351	Contigua	3:40 p.m.	3:55 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4346	Básica	4:05 p.m.	4:15 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4346	Contigua	4:05 p.m.	4:15 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4321	Básica	4:20 p.m.	4:30 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4321	Contigua	4:20 p.m.	4:30 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4329	Básica	4:35 p.m.	5:00 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4329	Contigua	4:35 p.m.	5:00 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4377	Básica	5:05 p.m.	5:20 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4377	Contigua 1	5:05 p.m.	5:20 p.m.
Benito Juárez	15	4377	Contigua 2	5:05 p.m.	5:20 p.m.
<b>VOTE COUNT</b>					
Coyoacán	23	0393	Básica	6:15 p.m.	9:30 p.m.
Coyoacán	23	0393	Contigua	6:15 p.m.	9:30 p.m.



## APPENDIX 6 : ITINERARY OF TEAM 2

Municipality/ neighbourhood	District	Section	Polling station	Arrival time	Departure time
Coyoacán	23	0370	Básica	7:45 a.m.	<b>8:48 a.m.</b>
Iztacalco	13	1698	Básica	9:40 a.m.	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>
Iztacalco	13	1698	Contigua	9:40 a.m.	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>
Iztacalco	13	1697	Básica	10:13 a.m.	<b>10:45 a.m.</b>
Iztacalco	13	1697	Contigua	10:13 a.m.	<b>10:45 a.m.</b>
Cuauhtémoc	12	4902	Contigua 1	11:17 a.m.	<b>11:35 a.m.</b>
Cuauhtémoc	12	4902	Contigua 2	11:17 a.m.	<b>11:35 a.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5263	Contigua 1	11:50 a.m.	<b>12:10 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5263	Básica	11:50 a.m.	<b>12:10 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5221	Básica	1:32 p.m.	<b>2:00 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5221	Contigua	1:32 p.m.	<b>2:00 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5342	Especial	2:17 p.m.	<b>2:30 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5304	Básica	2:45 p.m.	<b>3:00 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5318	Básica	3:05 p.m.	<b>3:20 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5318	Contigua 1	3:08 p.m.	<b>3:20 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5276	Básica	4:10 p.m.	<b>4:30 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5276	Contigua 1	4:10 p.m.	<b>4:30 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5276	Contigua 2	4:10 p.m.	<b>4:30 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5284	Básica	4:45 p.m.	<b>5:00 p.m.</b>
Venustiano Carranza	09	5284	Contigua	4:45 p.m.	<b>5:00 p.m.</b>
Coyoacán	23	0479	Básica	5:38 p.m.	<b>5:55 p.m.</b>
VOTE COUNT					
Coyoacán	23	0370	Básica	6:15 p.m.	<b>9:30 p.m.</b>
Coyoacán	<b>23</b>	<b>0370</b>	<b>Contigua</b>	<b>6:15 p.m.</b>	<b>9:30 p.m.</b>



## APPENDIX 7 : ITINERARY OF TEAM 3

Municipality/ neighbourhood	District	Section	Polling station	Arrival time	Departure time
Álvaro Obregón	26	3430	Básica	7:40 a.m.	9:20 a.m.
Álvaro Obregón	26	3430	Contigua 1	7:50 a.m.	9:20 a.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4851	Básica	10:05 a.m.	11:30 a.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4851	Contigua 1	10:05 a.m.	11:30 a.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4851	Contigua 2	10:05 a.m.	11:30 a.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	5013	Especial	11:40 a.m.	11:55 a.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4838	Básica	12:15 p.m.	12:25 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4838	Contigua 1	12:15 p.m.	12:25 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4838	Contigua 2	12:15 p.m.	12:25 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4985	Básica	12:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4985	Contigua 1	12:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4987	Básica	12:55 p.m.	1:05 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4987	Contigua 1	12:55 p.m.	1:05 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4987	Contigua 2	12:55 p.m.	1:05 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4963	Básica	1:15 p.m.	1:30 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4963	Contigua 1	1:15 p.m.	1:30 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4963	Contigua 2	1:15 p.m.	1:30 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4975	Básica	1:35 p.m.	1:45 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4975	Contigua 1	1:35 p.m.	1:45 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4975	Contigua 2	1:35 p.m.	1:45 p.m.
Tlanepantla de Baz	15	4964	Básica	1:50 p.m.	2:00 p.m.
Tlanepantla de	15	4964	Contigua 1	1:50 p.m.	2:00 p.m.

<b>Baz</b>					
<b>Tlanepantla de Baz</b>	15	4964	Contigua 2	1:50 p.m.	<b>2:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Tlanepantla de Baz</b>	15	5120	Básica	2:08 p.m.	<b>2:15 p.m.</b>
<b>Tlanepantla de Baz</b>	15	5104	Básica	2:20 p.m.	<b>2:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Tlanepantla de Baz</b>	15	5104	Contigua	2:20 p.m.	<b>2:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Tlanepantla de Baz</b>	15	4967	Básica	2:40 p.m.	<b>2:55 p.m.</b>
<b>Tlanepantla de Baz</b>	15	4967	Contigua	2:40 p.m.	<b>2:55 p.m.</b>
<b>Tlanepantla de Baz</b>	15	4982	Básica	3:08 p.m.	<b>3:25 p.m.</b>
<b>Tlanepantla de Baz</b>	15	4982	Contigua	3:08 p.m.	<b>3:25 p.m.</b>
<b>VOTE COUNT</b>					
<b>Álvaro Obregón</b>	26	3430	Básica	5:35 p.m.	<b>9:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Álvaro Obregón</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3430</b>	<b>Contigua</b>	<b>5:35 p.m.</b>	<b>9:30 p.m.</b>



**COPA Electoral Observation Mission**

**PARLIAMENTARIANS CONGRATULATE THE MEXICAN PEOPLE  
ON ORDERLY ELECTIONS**

**Mexico, June 8, 2015** – A **Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA)** delegation headed by Richard Merlini, Member of the National Assembly of Québec (Canada), observed the general elections of June 7, 2015.

On election day, the members of the delegation went to the capital, Mexico City, and to the State of Mexico, in particular the city of Tlanepantla, to observe voting in close to 80 polling stations. Despite some negative reports, the delegates noted that the electoral process was complied with and that voting ran smoothly. In fact, the delegates were impressed by voters' civic-mindedness. The delegates also noted the transparency, availability and excellent work of the electoral staff of the National Electoral Institute of Mexico, especially the successful implementation of the elements of the 2014 electoral reform.

Since its arrival on June 3, in addition to its polling station observations, the COPA delegation has held important meetings with political party authorities, the General Council of the National Electoral Institute, and civil society representatives to obtain information on the political and electoral situation prevailing in the country. A full report on the mission will be prepared and sent to the Mexican electoral authorities.

This was the 15th electoral observation mission carried out by COPA, whose strategic importance in consolidating democracy has been confirmed through the increasingly active role it plays in election monitoring throughout the Americas. Founded in Québec City in 1997, COPA comprises over 300 parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal and federated states, as well as the regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas.

- 30 -

**Source and information:**

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