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Today, Mexico is a world agri-food power: Enrique Peña Nieto

You have played a key role in this transformation, in which our country has left behind the face of poverty that represented the agricultural sector in much of the country, he told them.

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- This has been made possible by the convergence of efforts, government policies and determined commitment, and above all, the greater commitment entrepreneurs and their workers have made to the agri-food sector, to make Mexico a much more productive country and power, he declared..
- Today Mexicans produce more and better food. We do so in an increasingly profitable way because we are more productive, and we do so in a sustainable way because we are committed to future generations, he said.
- "In the first five years of this government, in comparison with the same period in the previous administration, the agricultural sector recorded accumulated real growth of 13.6 percent," he declared.
- And in the last three years alone, this sector has grown twice as much as the rest of the economy; in other words, after the foundations were laid, the last three years have seen greater dynamism and greater growth":
- For the first time since the signing of NAFTA, since 2016 we have been the main food supplier to the United States, one of the world's largest consumer markets, he said.
- He led the closing ceremony of the 34th Ordinary General Assembly of the National Agricultural Council.



As he led the closing ceremony of the 34th Ordinary General Assembly of the National Agricultural Council (CNA), President Enrique Peña Nieto declared that, "Today, Mexico, it must be said, is a world power in agri-food matters".

He stated that, "During the past five years, Mexico has advanced along the path to positioning itself as an agro-food power".

"And I say this unreservedly: the agricultural sector, it must be said, is experiencing its best moment, and I hope that in the future it will attain greater achievements, follow this path of further development, transformation and growth, and that all this will be an important contribution to the greatness of Mexico and the welfare of Mexican families," he added.


The president declared that this has been made possible by the convergence of efforts, government policies and determined commitment, and above all, the greater commitment entrepreneurs and their workers have made to the agri-food sector, to make Mexico a much more productive country and power".

"I repeat: This is due to the work and commitment of men and women in the countryside, who know better than anyone the magnitude of the change the Mexican agricultural sector has experienced," he said.

"Today Mexicans produce more and better food. We do so in an increasingly profitable way because we are more productive, and we do so in a sustainable way because we are committed to the future generations," he added.

He thanked the entrepreneurs in the sector. "You have played a key role in this transformation in which our country has left behind the face of poverty that represented the agricultural sector in much of the country," he said.

The president declared that, "You only have to look at the figures to realize the depth of this transformation" in the agricultural sector.

 “In the first five years of this government, in comparison with the same period in the previous administration, the agricultural sector recorded accumulated real growth of 13.6 percent. And in the past three years alone, this sector has grown twice as much as the rest of the economy; in other words, since the foundations were laid, the last three years have seen greater dynamism and growth”, he said.

He declared that the conquest of external markets has been a key factor behind these numbers. Between 2012 and 2017, agrifood exports grew by almost 60 percent, exceeding \$138 billion USD”.

“Mexico is already the world’s twelfth largest food producer and the eighteenth largest food exporter. We are the world’s leading beer exporter, as well as the main avocado producer and exporter, and in fact Mexico is among the top ten of a dozen agricultural and livestock products. Moreover, between 2012 and 2017, aquaculture production grew more than 50 percent, making us one of the main producers of tuna, shrimp and octopus.

He said that, “The government has accompanied this transformation by doing its part. During this Administration, we promoted a national agro-food policy with a very clear objective: to obtain more and better food through higher productivity”:

He explained that three fronts were advanced to achieve this:

First. “We expanded, as never before, the technified irrigation surface and the mechanization of the countryside. At the beginning of this Administration, we set out to technify 450,000 hectares with irrigation and today we have far exceeded this goal. We estimate that at the current rate, by the end of this administration we will have achieved a surface of technified irrigation of 650,000 hectares, and in terms of mechanization, in the past five years, 170,000 producers will have benefited with tractors, motor cultivators and sprinklers”.



Second. “We have promoted greater access to credit and greater financial services for producers, through the transformation of Financiera Rural into the new Rural Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries Development Financing Department. In the last analysis, Financiera Rural not only changed its name: it changed its design, strategy and the policies to ensure more financing for the agricultural sector. With a comprehensive vision and solid financial assets, the new institution has been able to offer credit at lower rates and expand its product portfolio, especially for women and small producers. In the first five years of this administration, a significant amount of credit has been assigned to the countryside, totaling nearly 1.7 billion pesos, 57 percent more in real terms than during the same period in the previous administration”.

The third factor to boost productivity. “Has been to enable the food produced in Mexico to reach the tables of more consumers around the world. This allows our farmers, ranchers and fishermen to leverage competitive advantages and reach the markets yielding the highest profits. The fact is that today no country produces everything it consumes, and this is a myth that must be destroyed. There is no point in aspiring to what I think has been a myth, a milestone to reach, which in a globalized world frankly makes no sense, aspiring to self-sufficiency was a mistaken policy of the past”.

He pointed out that, “What countries should aspire to, and that the position Mexico has achieved today, is to guarantee the availability of food, first through strong internal production, so much so that today we export more than what we import. But at the same time, we are also trading with the world on favorable terms, which is what allows us to ensure that Mexicans have a great diversity of foods and products that enrich their daily diet”.

President Peña Nieto declared that, “A more productive countryside with more exports has allowed us, for the first time in 25 years, to have a surplus agro-food trade balance. That is what has happened in the last three years, in 2015, 2016, and



2017, and I am sure 2018 will confirm the productive capacity of our country”.

He declared that, “Today we sell 20 percent more food than we buy from the world. And importantly: since 2016, we have been -and we had never achieved this position-, the leading food supplier of the United States, one of the world’s largest consumer markets”:

“This is the first time this has happened since the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement, and it shows how trade links between the two countries are deep and benefit producers and consumers on both sides of the border,” he added.

STRATEGY TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN THE MODERN, INDUSTRIALIZED, AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK SECTOR, AND THE ONE WITH LOW PRODUCTIVITY AND INCOMES

The President said that, “Despite this encouraging reality, we must recognize that there are still challenges in the agricultural sector. Alongside the modern, industrialized agricultural and livestock sector, there is another one with low productivity and low income, and in order to close the gap between these two realities, we have implemented a strategy developed along three main axes”:

- “Reorienting federal support in order to boost productivity. With the new PROAGRO Productivo, support now focuses on improving yields. Today, PROAGRO serves more than 2.3 million producers who cultivate 13 million hectares, that is, more than half the total cultivated area of our country. Additionally, as of this month, SAGARPA and CONAPESCA increased the incentive for gasoline and diesel to support fishermen and aquaculturists”.
- “Improving the income of small producers. To this end, programs such as partnership schemes, agribusiness clusters, integrating companies and contract farming were designed. Despite the success of these programs, the increase in production costs and the fall in the prices of certain products have significantly reduced the livelihood of some families in the Mexican countryside, which is why I gave precise, clear indications to Agriculture Secretary Baltazar Hinojosa, for



SAGARPA to analyze, and if necessary, update the target income levels for grains and oilseeds”.

- “Promoting agri-food production in the south-southeast of the country. Special Economic Zones are a central part of this strategy. The development of agro-industry in the south of the country will allow the transformation of food to be carried out in this same region, for the benefit of local producers.

The president said that an additional policy that has been promoted, “Concerns the support of field workers who move around the country in search of better opportunities”.

“This is the Comprehensive Care Strategy for Day Laborers and Migrant Farmers, day laborers and domestic workers, who seek opportunities throughout the country for whom we are designing this joint plan with the National Agricultural Council, recognizing their contribution and ideas so that we can really work together”, he declared.

He hailed the joint effort between the National Agricultural Council and the government , “because it will undoubtedly ensure better quality of life for the 2.5 million day laborers, nine million people if we include their families”.

Lastly, he said that, “We must change the double reality Mexico experiences, narrowing the equality gap, for which specific policies have been defined for various sectors of the economy that allow us to reverse the scenario that is part of our reality”.

During the event, the president presented prizes to the winners of the 2017 National Agricultural Prize:

- In the National Large Agroindustrial category, to Javier Bours, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bachoco, and to José Eduvigildo Carranza Beltrán, Chairman of the Board of Directors of MAZ Industrial.
- In the Intermediate International Agroindustrial category, to Jorge Martínez Carrillo,



Executive President of Mexico of Malta Texo de México.

The president was awarded the Integral Attention Strategy for Migrant Agricultural Laborers by Chairman of the National Agricultural Council, Bosco de la Vega Valladolid.

THE CNA VALORES THE STATE VISION AND THE DIGNIFIED, INTELLIGENT, PRUDENT AND FORCEFUL DEFENSE OF MEXICO BY PRESIDENT PEÑA NIETO: BOSCO DE LA VEGA VALLADOLID

Bosco de la Vega Valladolid, President of the National Agricultural Council (CNA), thanked the President for his great work on behalf of the Council: "Count on us to continue building, shoulder to shoulder, this great country and strengthen its institutions. Our respect, Mr. President, for your dignified, intelligent, prudent and forceful defense of Mexico and our fellow countrymen in response to the insistent, constant and imprudent aggressions of President Donald. You have our support and gratitude".

He also thanked the President for, "His state vision in the key structural reforms that are transforming the future and viability of our great country". He also thanked him for, "His major contributions in infrastructure, the fight against crime, employment, housing loans, education, culture and job stability".

He declared that in the ANC, "We value our vision and great effort in terms of international negotiations", and "Your leadership and defense of the commercial interests of our country, in an extremely complex international context".

He declared that this Council fully supports the principles and objectives established by the government for the renegotiation of NAFTA, and welcomed the agreement announced in principle for the modernization of the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union and Mexico.



“We respect and value your state vision, Mr. President, we will accompany you until the last day of your administration, and it will be our privilege to continue later as friends,” said Bosco de la Vega.

He declared that the ANC is committed to, “Building on what has already been built and trusting in our country, investing in our people and firms, producing more and better food for the world,” and hailed the fact that, “the agri-food sector has become a benchmark of excellent news, growing twice as much as the economy as a whole”.

“We are the most dynamic sector as regards job creation”. We continue to break records in agrifood exports; this year, we have forecast \$35 billion USD in exports. Since 2015, we have exported more than we import and after 20 years of deficit, we hail the fact that we closed 2017 with a surplus of \$6.221 billion USD,” he declared.

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