



Mexico:
Accumulation of debits
makes an uncertain future

Executive Summary
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SIGNOS VIVAS
EL PULSO DE MÉXICO

Executive Summary

PASSIVE ACCRUAL OVER TIME

In this Signos Vitales report, *Mexico: accumulation of debits makes an uncertain future*, the considerable accumulation of issues, needs, and old requests are addressed, which president Lopez Obrador's government has not attended. During this time, prioritizing strategy on issues to address has changed, resulting in an incompatible reality that millions of Mexicans face daily.

This new way of the Mexican government, underpinned by a communication strategy that stigmatizes, polarizes, and reduces falsehoods that hide

reality, has come with devastating institutional destruction and dismantling of the government's capabilities, and a regrettable budgetary reduction to institutions and vital programs to provide public goods and proper government performance. This scenario has complicated not only an expedited way out to several crises that the country has, but it has also destroyed the progress and developments reached in prior years. Furthermore, it calls into question the return to those levels of development and growth before the pandemic, which glimpse harder and further

from reach. These bad decisions spiral originate on inadequate policy planning, which has ignored the basic tools and mechanisms to build, apply, and evaluate public policies.

The current government is more focused on communicating a message of change than its construction or implementation.

Even though the pandemic has affected each and every one of the growth axes of the country, the effects are exacerbated due to the ineffective and insecure actions taken to face it. The government, also, has been an aggravating factor to the problems by not taking concrete steps to forward an opportune resolution. The passivity and the wrong decisions with which the government has faced many of the country's problems have had adverse results on the economic, social, and state of law.

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POLICY, GOVERNING, AND THE STATE OF LAW

The constitutional and legal weathering that Mexico has experimented with in the last three years is a symptom of the little regulatory esteem for democracy that many representatives have and constitutes debts we will have to carry to the future. This report shows that despite the zero corruption and illegality acceptations, summed up in a phrase “by the margin of the law, above the law no one,” with which Lopez Obrador came to the presidency, the federal government has made transformations to the constitutional and legal framework through mechanisms that have blurred the separation of power and led to the extreme the legality of the procedures to perform amendments to the regulatory framework. All these allegedly unconstitutional amendments have been possible due to two factors: 1) the qualified majority the president built in congress after the 2018 elections, and 2) the inactivity of the SCJN (National Supreme Court of Justice, for its acronym in Spanish) faces the majority of objections against the decisions, amendments, and relevant laws for the federal government. Just in three years (2018–2021), 55 constitutional amendments have been performed.



**IN THREE YEARS (2018–2021):
55 CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS**

About political violence, the figures are alarming. Etellekt (2021b) consultant recorded 1,066 crimes committed against political people in the last electoral process. Hence, this process can be considered the most aggressive of the democratic age of the country: aggressions against politicians compared to the previous electoral process increased 38%.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

**1,066 CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST POLITICAL PEOPLE,
INCREASED BY 38% COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS
ELECTORAL PROCESS**



Contrary to the expectations of the current government, the use of the Armed Forces use in public safety was kept and deepened. This administration has extended the capabilities and responsibilities of the Army and the Navy. Nevertheless, organized crime still has a presence in most of the country, and it seems to control broad surfaces of the territory. Their growing role in the elections has become a worrying issue or even a threat to the Mexican democracy and state stability. According to data from Lantia Intelligence (2021), the CJNG (Jalisco New Generation Cartel, for its acronym in Spanish) and the Sinaloa Cartel are the organized crime organizations with a presence in the most federative entities, 29 and 28, respectively. Despite that, the Sinaloa Cartel is one of the most distributed and well-armed in the country, is not the one with the most registered detainees, 163 detained, but the CJBG, which has suffered at least, 683 members detained during the current administration.

DETENTION OF CARTELS' MEMBERS:

CARTEL	DETAINEES
SINALOA	163
JALISCO NEW GENERATION	683

Issues like freedom of expression are still vulnerable. As reported by Artículo 19, during 2020, one aggression to the press was registered every 13 hours, and the number of media-related attacks increased 13.6% compared to 2019. In total, in 2020, the organization counted 692 aggressions against the press. Journalist and media stigmatization has been promoted from the National Palace.

ONE AGRESSION AGAINST THE PRESS EVERY 13 HOURS

NUMBER OF ATTACKS	IN 2020: 13.6% MORE THAN IN 2019	
AGRESSIONS AGAINST THE PRESS IN 2020	692	

MEDIA STIGMATIZATION HAS BEEN PROMOTED FROM THE NATIONAL PALACE

All the tables and graphs that support this study can be consulted in the Report *Mexico: accumulation of debits makes an uncertain future* at www.signosvitalismexico.org.mx

Besides, the Mexican chief executive kept his attacks against the pillars of the Mexican democracy: his request to disappear the INE (National Electoral Institute, for its acronym in Spanish) and the Electoral Tribunal of the Judiciary Power of the Federation, and the rejection of constitutionally autonomous bodies like INAI (Federal Institute for Access to Public Information and Data Protection, for its acronym in Spanish), the Federal Economic Competition Commission (COFECE, for its acronym in Spanish), and the Federal Telecommunications Institute (IFT, for its acronym in Spanish), going as far as to propose its disappearance and transfer their responsibilities to the federal public administration and the Judiciary Power of the Federation. He already nullified the Energy Regulatory Commission, the Hydrocarbons Commission, and the National Human Rights Commission.



PRECARIOUS ECONOMIC GROWTH

The absence of the federal government on implementing policies that allow Mexicans, their families, and companies to get off lightly from the sanitary crisis and all its consequences is known and evident. The blow infringed by the COVID-19 pandemic was initially brutal, destroying supply chains and closing non-essential activities. The Mexican government fell into the trap of closing the economy without support to families or corporations, which meant losing employment and closing productive establishments. The amounts destined by the federal government to face the crisis and compensating damages caused by it are minimal. With data from the Fiscal Monitor Database of Country Fiscal Measures in Response to the COVID-19 pandemic from the International Monetary Fund, we know that the Mexican government appears as the emergent country with medium income with less discretionary supports has assigned by April 2021 (0.65 GDP %). There were no extraordinary supports for workers or companies.

There was a reduction in the economically active population (PNEA, Non-Economically Active Population for its acronym in Spanish) of 9.9 million people

on the employment market, but the people returning to the employment market are fundamentally male. The impact has befallen women and young people. Almost 11.6 million people were added to the employment market after the sanitary crisis year, of which 41.3% are women, and 58.7% are male.



MEXICO:

COUNTRY WITH LESS SUPPORTS ASSIGNED (0.65% GDP)

ALMOST 11.6 MILLION PEOPLE WERE ADDED TO THE LABOR MARKET AFTER THE SANITARY CRISIS YEAR; 41.3% ARE WOMEN AND 58.7% ARE MEN.

Regarding the tourism sector, the federal government has an approved budget of 38,613 million pesos for 2021. Of that budget, 98% will be destined for the Maya train construction, implying that only 2% is destined for the Secretariat of Tourism activities. Therefore, the construction sector has been marked by the continuation of the flagship projects of the federal executives (Maya Train, Dos Bocas Refinery, and the Felipe Ángeles International Airport), which represents a decrease in the construction production value by the first 2021 quarter of 85,702 million pesos comparing it annually (-7.3%), 3.7 higher than the whole economy contraction. Focusing on the projects above, the government stopped investing in priority areas like social development, health, and education.

On the demand side, private consumption shows an improvement. The improvement is recorded regarding the annual comparison (April 2021 vs. April 2020), a 25.3% increment because it was on the historical minimum last year. Nevertheless, it is still 10% under the consumption level before the pandemic.

TOURISM BUDGET FOR 2021:

MAYA TRAIN	98%
SECRETARIAT OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES	2%

FALL IN THE CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTION VALUE BY 2021 1ST QUARTER:

85,702 MILLION PESOS	-7.3%	
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IMPROVEMENT OF PRIVATE CONSUMPTION APRIL 2020 – 2021:

APRIL 2021	INCREASE OF 25.3%, BUT 10% UNDER THE CONSUMPTION LEVEL BEFORE THE PANDEMIC
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PITIFUL SOCIAL REALITY IN MEXICO

Albeit poverty in Mexico is a historic structural issue that has been painfully persistent despite the efforts, the current landscape paints a significant setback on its fighting. Poverty went from 41.9% of people in poverty conditions in 2018 to 43.9% by 2020, which reverts us to levels reported before 2016, implying an increment of 3.8 million people between 2018 and 2020 (CONEVAL, Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy, for its acronym in Spanish, 2021). This crisis is also present on the extreme poverty levels going from 7% in 2018 to 8.5% of people in extreme poverty by 2020, a phenomenon that means 2.1 million people living in extreme poverty increment. That is to say, in two years, we lost the progress of almost five years in terms of poverty and social well-being in Mexico.

According to the Social Development Policy Evaluation Report 2020, the percentage of the population in labor poverty between the first quarter of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 increased 10.7 percentage points at a national level, with a higher impact on urban zones (14.8%) than rural zones (1.9%).

According to ENIGH (National Household Income and Expenditure Survey, for its acronym in Spanish) 2020,

POVERTY IN MEXICO:

POVERTY 2018	41.9%	
POVERTY 2020	43.9%	(INCREASE OF 3.8 MILLION PEOPLE) 
EXTREME POVERTY 2018	7%	
EXTREME POVERTY 2020	8.5%	(INCREASE OF 2.1 MILLION PEOPLE) 
LABOR POVERTY	BETWEEN 2020 1ST QUARTER TO 2021 1ST QUARTER INCREASED 10.7% 	
URBAN LABOR POVERTY	14.8%	
RURAL LABOR POVERTY	1.9%	



income in Mexican households have been kept by two primary sources: the wages per work and the other are transferences. Governmental support from the federal government reveals a noteworthy increment, 50.5%, compared to 2018. Nevertheless, the distribution of transfers was highly regressive: the poor received less than the higher-income population. For 10% of the poorest households (Decile I), the government transfers dropped 32%, while 30% for the wealthiest population in the country (Deciles VIII, IX, and X) support from social programs and scholarships increased by 129% (INEGI, 2021c).

The inequality aggravation in Mexico has been sharpened by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on society's well-being and considering the tiny government reaction to buffer its impacts. CONEVAL 2021 reports an increment in three of the six indicators of social scarcity. The lack of access to health services increased by 12 percentual points (16.2% in 2018 to 28.2% in 2020), which means 15.6 million people stopped having health services access, 0.9 million people with educational lag, and 1.1 million people more with scarcity on the access to a nutritious and quality diet.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS INCREASED 50.5% IN RELATION TO 2018

POOR PEOPLE RECEIVED LESS THAN RICH PEOPLE			
Decil I 70 % poorest population	32%		
Deciles VIII, IX, X 30% wealthier population	129%		

LACK OF ACCESS TO HEALTH, INCREASED BY 12PP			
2018	16.2% 15.6 million people		
2020	28.2%		

EDUCATION LAG: 0.9 MILLION PEOPLE

LACK OF ACCESS TO NUTRITIONAL FOOD

In Mexico, the lack of a structured plan to attend to the sanitary crisis forced an already worn out and overloaded health system to redirect their scarce resources to tend to the COVID-19 sick patients. Without added public resources, the deterioration of the physical infrastructure and the virus's mortality rate increased. The health system's collapse reflects the opportunity cost of what was not done and what is being done. The destruction of the Seguro Popular (Popular Insurance) and its failed substitution for the INSABI meant that 15.6 million people would stop having coverage from the public health system; hence, 35.7 million people do not have access to health (CO-NEVAL, 2021). The excess of deaths above the recorded on previous years during the pandemic involves 498 thousand people who would not have died in normal circumstances. The mortality rate excess indicates that of those, 353 thousand are associated with COVID-19; that is to say, there is no explanation for the rest of the deaths totaling 145 thousand.

There is currently no globally systematic follow-up on the number of health workers who passed away after contracting COVID-19. However, specifically in Mexico, according to data provided by the Health Secretariat by July 17th, 2021, there are 4,084 confirmed deaths of health personnel, where Mexico

DESTRUCTION OF SEGURO POPULAR AND SUBSTITUTION FOR INSABI	
WITHOUT COVERAGE	15.6 million people
TOTAL PEOPLE WITHOUT ACCESS TO HEALTH	35.7 million people



EXCESS OF DEATHS	
Covid-19	353 thousand people
Excess	145 thousand people
Total	498 thousand people



4,084 DEATHS OF HEALTH PERSONNEL	
65%	concentrated in 10 states

VACCINATION	
By August 3rd	21% completed
	17% partially




City, Mexico State, Puebla, Veracruz, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Tabasco y Tamaulipas are the ten entities with the higher number of deaths, focusing 65% of the total deaths.

The vaccination process follows some strange dynamic, where phase 5, established by the Health Ministry, starts in July 2021. By then the groups of 40–49 years old, 50–59 years old, and pregnant women over 18 years old, health personnel, and the elderly, counting almost 96.1 million Mexicans should have been inoculated. Nevertheless, by August 3rd, 2021, only 20% of the population is fully inoculated and 17% more is just partially vaccinated.

The education situation is equally dramatic. In the face of the SARS–CoV–2 virus arrival to our country, the cessation of classes was imminent to avoid the spread and death of students, teachers, and school working personnel. Unfortunately, in Mexico, the cessation has lingered for a year and a half, and there has never been a safe return to classes plan. In this improvised situation, the president insists that there will be a return the following school cycle under any circumstance. Hundreds of educational sites are in dire condition on infrastructure and equipment matters aggravated by the abandonment during the pan-

demie, and they do not have the economic resources to compensate for those deficiencies. Finally, there is no differentiated attention program for students since the pandemic impacts have not been homogeneous. This situation sharpens inequality in the whole population, but principally among the most vulnerable, which predisposes the opportunities an individual had from childhood to youth and the future–income potential of people. The yesteryear lags multiply in the future.

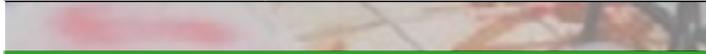
In addition to that, the unenrolled population by educational level on the school cycle 2020–2021 shows children that should be in primary school and are not ascends to a little more than 25 million, while in junior high are 13 million, in high school 14 million. In higher education, 40 million people are not enrolled in the appropriate level. The truncation of educational trajectories has adverse effects on the very long-term in people and their families.





CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS IN MEXICO

YEAR AND A HALF WITHOUT ANY PLAN TO A SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL



STUDENTS NOT REGISTERED BY ACADEMIC LEVEL IN THE 2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Elementary	25 million children
Junior High	35 million students
High School	more than 14 million students
Bachelor's	40 million students



Image: "In the whole country 5 thousand 493 schools were sacked; during pandemic of covid" in excelsior.com.mx at <https://tinyurl.com/2eewx7c6>

ENERGY INSECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DECAY

Mexico has been considered a country with relative “Energy Safety” due to its access and supply of energy from the United States of America. Notwithstanding, the policy to manage that energy safety is based on self-sufficiency. There is no safety considering the productive capacity to satisfy the energy demand, due to the consumption levels of energy from 2015 are higher in 44.4% (2018) and 39.1% (2019) to those produced. That reflects the country’s incapability to supply internal demand. Therefore, it seems the concept and the way to reach “energy safety” must be changed.

The poor energy production shows an inefficient and insecure sector in energy matters, at least by the 2019 closing, despite the first results of the Energy Reform of 2013 and the creation of the Energy and Hydrocarbons Industry Law in 2014. Energy production from non-renewable sources decreased its participation from 87.9% in 2014 to 83.9% of the national output in 2019. Nevertheless, with data from SENER (Ministry of Energy for its acronym in Spanish) (2019), energy consumption in the same sector increased 10.75%; consequently, CO₂ emissions increased volume from 5.3% from 2014 to 2018. For its part, the total energy

produced by renewable sources increased its participation from 7.5% in 2014 to 10.5% total in 2019.

Energy production from hydrocarbons (crude oil, natural gas, charcoal, etcetera) is the primary source of CO₂ emissions. The energy coming from these sources represents 83.9% of the total production in 2019, from which crude oil contributes more than 60% of the produced energy in the 2010–2019 period. This volume is six times higher than the contribution from renewable sources representing 10.4% by 2019. The energy supply is insufficient and low quality from the environmental perspective and origin, given the high CO₂ levels emitted and the lack of sustainability in the energy sector.

On environmental matters, there has not been substantial progress in many years in the country. The hydrological panorama is turning critical when analyzing the availability and quality of water. The grade of water analysis of the surface network (comprised of 3,493 quality of water monitoring sites) of the National Water Commission in 2020 proved that only 36.3% of the analyzed sites complied with all the acceptable quality limits.



ENERGY CONSUMPTION

2018	44.4%
2019	39.1%

PRODUCTION OF DIRTY ENERGY (FOSSILE FUELS)

2019	83.9%
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CLEAN ENERGY PRODUCTION (RENEWABLE)

2019	10.4%
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Likewise, air quality is low (bad), since, based on the last reported data of WHO, by 2017, more than 90% of the population is exposed to levels exceeding the indicative value of air pollution by particles PM2.5, causing cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and different types of cancer. The mortality rate of these diseases related to environmental and air pollution (OPS, 2014) by 2019 represented 15.6% of deaths, increasing 0.2% from 2011 to 2019, a percentage estimated to have exponentially incremented by COVID-19. By July 19th, 2021, the registered figures rise to “236,331 deaths” (Worldometer, 2021), deaths that are expected to keep growing exponentially on this third pandemic wave. In terms of air quality, this leads us to higher pretensions in health becoming critical when the COVID-19 pandemic is added.

The economic activities and the changes in soil use have represented an evolution in the increment of industrial and farming lands at the expense of the jungles, forest, and Natural Protected Areas (ANP, for its acronym in Spanish) surfaces. This condition contributes to hydrological erosion and soil degradation. This situation is reflected in 14 of the 17 ANP included in the Mexican Resilience Project for the strengthening and management efficiency and resilience of the ANP’s to protect threatened biodiversity threatened

by climate change. They face deforestation, solid residue pollution, and farming malpractice issues, among others, according to the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP, for its acronym in Spanish) (CONANP & PNUD [United Nations Development Programme for its acronym in Spanish], 2019). Water, air, and soil pollution are contributing progressively more significant environmental erosion in all the national territory, which will lead us to higher levels of poverty and food insecurity from the use of soil perspective and its long-term productivity.



The problem in Mexico in relationship with science and technology promotion is equally alarming. Expenditure in research and development as a GDP percentage shows that Mexico is one of the economies with lower participation in Latin America. It is an obstacle for the country on its progress towards a knowledge economy, capable of linking the public sector with public universities, research centers and primarily the private sector. In the 2010–2019 period, the expenditure on research and development financing (GIDE, Total Expenditure in Research and Development for its acronym in Spanish) by the government and the corporate sector, in real terms, decreased 14.3% and 60.7%, respectively. Consequently, funding to Scientific and Experimental Research Development (IDE, for its acronym in Spanish) decreased by 28.5%.

EXPENDITURE IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT 2010–2019	
GOVERNMENT SECTOR	14.3%
CORPORATE SECTOR	60.7%
TOTAL FUNDING TO SCIENTIFIC AND EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT	28.5%



FINAL COMMENTS

Plunged in multiple crises, Mexico is moving towards an unknown terrain in matters of constitutional and democratic, freedom of expression, public safety, economy, health, education, renewable energy weathering, and much more. In most of these cases, this path has been taken due to accumulated problems that the federal government has not faced correctly and on time. The lack of adequate public policy tools is much more evident and reflects constant incompetence and ignorance on the general problem management, sided by passivity and inefficiency in its processing.

This Signos Vitales report enlightens the footprint the government has left through almost three years of management, especially about the level of institutional destruction and dismantling of government capabilities that were acquired and the unjustified budgetary austerity on priority matters. The noticeable scarcity of results in practically every area in which the government interjects shows that the path taken to face the country's problems has failed. The cost for Mexicans and the country will be reflected in several years of progress lost on already built and developed

areas. The years it will take to reach the previous levels, at least 2018, must be added to that scenario.

Foreign policy has the same luck. According to Latin American Foreign Affairs (2019), with Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador's arrival to power, a new and peculiar foreign policy model was drafted. Its most significant change is focused on greater development cooperation with Central America, and the orthodoxy in applying the foreign policy principles. Unfortunately, Mexican foreign policy went from international recognition, with defined goals, objectives, and principles, to a convenience policy that broadcasts and multiplies the current administration's ideological interests, not the interests that work to insert a country into a global international cooperation spiral.

Albeit Mexican foreign policy fell into the narrowness of action, limited by the president's interests and his dismissal to everything that implies international cooperation, the consequences of this will be reflected when the various crises plaguing the country worsen, and international cooperation is required by need and not by protocol. The consequences of this isolation will be seen soon.

The government headed by Lopez Obrador is already an international sample of decadence and retrogress-

sion in practically every area where they have tried to solve a specific public issue. Almost at half of his management path, the government still has not resolved, much less mitigate problems like the increment of poverty in the country, or insecurity and violence, or the poor and unstable educational policy that has breached millions of children and adolescents, or the medication and treatment deprivation for patients with every type of ailments. The demands of millions of countrywomen have not been attended to, or the disregard given to the environmental care and protection that affects climate change. But above all, the sharpening of the constitutional and state of law weathering.

The cost for the Mexicans and the country will be reflected in several years of progress lost on already built and developed areas.

Mexican foreign policy went from international recognition, with defined goals, objectives, and principles, to a convenience policy that broadcasts and multiplies the current administration's ideological interests.

Even though the change and growth current government's promise existed at some point, that promise is getting further to be fulfilled. The inadequate diagnosis to detect and pinpoint the issues that plague the country, and the way and style public policies are built, implemented, and evaluated gives rise to problems that are not solved and the waste of Mexicans money. Adding to this scenario, the COVID-19 pandemic came to sharpen practically every issue of the country. This situation shows that we are far from reaching the previous growth and development expectations from only three to five years ago. Today, it is clear that the paths taken will not lead to a good landing.

The government headed by Lopez Obrador is already an international sample of decadence and retrogression in practically every area where they have tried to solve a specific public issue. .



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