




ASPEN INSTITUTE INDIA

A Conversation with....

H.E. Jaime Nualart, *Ambassador, Embassy of Mexico, India*



1. What steps can Mexico and India take, or are taking, in expanding the cooperation at the bilateral level? What are the opportunities and avenues available for the two nations in this regard?

Ambassador Nualart: In the field of cooperation, Mexico seeks to carry out new projects in science and technology with Indian counterparts, particularly in areas of strategic interest to both parties that boost economic development and result beneficial to the populations of both countries, such as water management, biotechnologies, geochemistry, best practices in social programs, new and renewable energies and seismic risks, among others. Besides economic cooperation, more recently we have focused on the sharing of best practices in social policies such as cash transfers, universal health care coverage and food security.

2. How does India fit in the Latin American view of development and politics? What are the existing synergies between India and Latin America, and India and Mexico, in sectors such as diplomacy, business and culture?

Ambassador Nualart: Political dialogue and economic cooperation in the Latin American and Caribbean region stand in firm ground at present. The recently formed Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, also known as CELAC, is an example of this. This block consists of 33 sovereign countries in the Americas, representing roughly 600 million people. It seeks to succeed the Rio Group in the further integration of our region. This new forum has brought about new prospects for cooperation with India. On Aug 2012, India hosted the first CELAC Foreign Minister's summit, with the participation of Chile, Venezuela and Cuba, representing CELAC's troika, who chose India as its first dialogue partner because of its dimensions, similar political positions on most issues, and affinity with the causes of the developing countries. This is one of the steps towards having a dialogue mechanism – similar to the India-Africa forum summit.

Regarding cooperation with Mexico, there are several mechanisms and frameworks in place, which make up the basis of the bilateral relation. These are the Bilateral Commission, the High Level Group on Economic and Investment Promotion, the Political Consultations Mechanism, as well as a number of bilateral agreements that cover most areas of cooperation such as customs cooperation, investment protection, tourism promotion, educational programs, among many others.



3. What is the role and scope of development cooperation between India and Mexico? Considering that the two nations face common problems in the realms of education, health and employment, what steps can be taken to address these issues?

Ambassador Nualart: The roles that both India and Mexico currently play in international development cooperation are increasingly relevant. As both donors and receivers of aid, Mexico and India perfectly exemplify the new development cooperation paradigm, as we share the duties of emerging donors that still qualify for receiving international aid.

In that sense, all aspects of social policy, such as poverty alleviation, education, healthcare, employment, must be addressed in these efforts. Mexico's development agency, AMEXCID, is determined to establish collaboration with relevant partners such as India, in order to tackle these persisting issues in our societies.

4. The Indian economy is going through a rough phase at present. The Rupee is at a low, inflation is high and growth is slow. In Mexico too, economy remains a sensitive issue. A key issue here is that of inclusive growth. In your view, how can nations such as India and Mexico promote inclusive opportunities, without comprising on growth?

Ambassador Nualart: In societies that are still struggling with high poverty levels, it is important to not sacrifice societal well-being for growth. In the end, growth is meant to be for societal well-being and not an isolated policy objective on its own.

Likewise for environmental issues, what is the point of sacrificing the environment to raise growth levels? In that sense, growth should come after societal and environmental well-being, and governments are starting to understand that. I believe there are many opportunities in the future to bring both growth and societal gains, given the important transformations that ITCs are making in the world.



5. What are the opportunities for India and Mexico to cement relations to not only enhance bilateral cooperation, but also emerge as a united force in the global order?

Ambassador Nualart: India and Mexico have always had friendly relations, despite geographical distances. Today, however, thanks to transport and communications, this is not a problem anymore.

The trade trend picked up greatly in the past 10 years and this should be followed by closer political relations. We must see each other not as competitors, but partners with shared goals and look for complementarities and synergies in our relation.

6. What are your views on the work of Aspen Institute India (AII) and its initiatives?

Ambassador Nualart: The Aspen Institute is a world-renowned institution and its activities in India are certainly relevant, given the new role India is playing in the international community. I have been delighted to engage with AII and will be glad to strengthen the relations between the Institute and our Embassy.

This email interview was carried out by Samarth Pathak (Aspen Institute India).