

An inclusive agenda for progress

By **EDUARDO MEDINA-MORA**

AMBASSADOR OF MEXICO TO THE UNITED KINGDOM



EDUARDO MEDINA-MORA has had a distinguished career in both the public and private sectors. He is the only official in history to have held the top three civilian security positions in the Mexican cabinet: Attorney-General (2006-09), Secretary of Public Security (2005-06) and Director-General of Mexico's intelligence agency, CISEN (2000-05). In the private sector, he was Corporate Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Director General of DESC Group from 1991-2000. He was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mexico to the Court of St James on 12th November, 2009.

Mexico assumed the annual Presidency of the G20 amid highly challenging international circumstances, both in terms of the intricacy of the problems at hand, but also due to the rapid pace at which they have unfolded. The scope and speed at which the uncertainty in the eurozone has rippled across the globe echo the events that followed the 2008 financial crisis.

Among the central factors that underpin these developments is the well known fact that the world has become increasingly interconnected; therefore it follows that if we are to harness all the positive forces that have been proven to be unleashed by globalisation, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive approach that targets the root of said problems, to hinder their recurrence and further enhance mechanisms that are necessary to provide certainty throughout the international community.

The world has also learnt tough lessons with regard to the dangers of short-term thinking in diverse sectors, ranging from the environment to the financial sector. Although the G20 has proven itself able to provide swift and effective responses to these testing issues in the past, this should not overshadow the importance of implementing policies that not only deliver robust growth, but also ensure this growth does not impose costs on future generations. If we are to truly achieve this, we cannot simply rely on a reactive mindset; it is clear that we need an institutional approach.

One vital factor that is required in order to accomplish such a broad, yet vital agenda is a fulcrum of leadership that has sufficient breadth and agility. This point is ever more relevant taking into consideration the fact that global economic forces are undergoing a profound shift, embodied most clearly by the rise of emerging markets in various continents. Due to its structural characteristics, the G20 is a most fitting forum to spearhead these initiatives.

In light of these considerations, Mexico set five priorities that have permeated the entirety of the preparatory process in the build up to the G20 Leaders' Summit. This effort seeks both to better reflect the holistic nature of the challenges the international community faces, but also to consolidate international cooperation with a view to having meaningful and tangible impacts.

Firstly, although fiscal imbalances undermine

international confidence, unemployment – particularly among the younger generations – is also a matter of the utmost urgency. In this sense, the current debate on austerity versus growth has created an unwelcome polarisation, when what is needed is a nuanced position that addresses the strengthening of economic fundamentals, whilst also emphasising the need to execute structural reforms in order to boost high-quality job creation as a central priority. However, both these strategic paths must be pursued with a mindset that gives due consideration to the short, medium and long term.

A second pressing issue is the importance of addressing the financial sector and its multiple ramifications. Although this industry is an indispensable lubricant for the engine that drives economic growth, recent turmoil has also shown us that it must be strengthened in order to avoid its pitfalls and decrease its vulnerability. Therefore, Mexico has followed up on the work that has been done on the subject since the 2008 financial crisis, whilst also making the case for new commitments to be made, in order to reach a balanced framework that is neither stifling nor complacent. In view of the financial sector's importance and the fact that 2.7 billion adults across the world do not benefit from its services, it is crucial to foster financial inclusion as a way to protect those who are already most vulnerable.

The ever-growing intricacy that the world is developing, and will continue to develop, requires a corresponding institutional approach. More precisely, the members of the G20 must make a concerted effort to construct a more muscular international financial architecture. The current turbulence which the international economy is undergoing makes a compelling case for the need for nodal sources of policy coordination and crisis prevention. Both of these functions can be best delivered by representative international financial institutions, backed with sufficient resources.

As part of its maturing process, the G20 has expanded the range of issues which it is prepared to tackle. If the achievements reached in these areas are not to wither away, they must be continuously streamlined within the Group's agenda, serving as a basis for further improvements. Continuing the work of past presidencies, Mexico has positioned food security as a central priority. Price fluctuations in commodity markets must be a central issue of concern, particularly taking into consideration the fact that the 900 million

people that live in conditions of extreme poverty spend half their income on food.

Finally, although our most pressing challenges require immediate attention, this cannot be an excuse to relegate what is arguably one of our generation's most demanding responsibilities. With the necessary ingenuity and determination, any obstacle, no matter how large, can be transformed into an opportunity. In this sense, Mexico has placed the fight against climate change as the fifth priority for the G20 during 2012, in order to further highlight the idea that this effort's profitability is manifold, both in terms of sustainability and economic growth. One particular topic that Mexico has also emphasised is the importance of increasing resilience by way of coordinated actions in disaster risk management.

Additionally, yet closely related to the five priorities, Mexico recognises the importance of furthering the work made by the Group with regard to transparency, particularly in the fight against corruption.

Since this is an overarching and inclusive agenda, it is imperative that the interlocutors that take part in its discussion also cover a broad array of sectors. The G20 must include all relevant stakeholders in order to gain timely and pertinent insights from multiple points

of view. This is why Mexico involved non-member countries, international organisations, the private sector, labour unions, academic institutions, think tanks, youth, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other members of civil society. This process of outreach will also render the decisions reached by the Group more legitimate and effective.

It should be noted that only a day after the Summit's conclusion, President Felipe Calderón will receive Prime Minister David Cameron in Mexico City. This official visit will be a testament to the ever-growing links that bind the UK and Mexico, a relationship that serves as an eloquent example of the type of cooperation that can be best enhanced and multiplied by the G20.

There is no denying that we are living in times of profound and rapid change. The potential for both magnificent and pernicious things to come to pass is equally latent; what is required in order for the world to choose the appropriate path in the face of this crossroads is bold, critical and coordinated decisions. In this sense, the G20 has not only the possibility, but also the duty to engage in frank discussions to show the responsible leadership that is required to build a future that has learnt from its past.

The G20 must include all relevant stakeholders in order to gain timely and pertinent insights from multiple points of view

The trusted partner of governments, central banks and issuing authorities across the globe

www.delarue.com



currency you can count on

De La Rue is involved in the production of over 150 national currencies



a new level of passport security

De La Rue currently delivers 28 million secure identity documents each year to customers worldwide



innovation and quality

At speeds of 144,000 banknotes per hour, the DLR 9000™ secures banknote quality through state-of-the-art single note inspection



DeLaRue