



An essential conversation for the future

NAPOLEÓN GÓMEZ URRUTIA

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On 8th and 9th December the fifth annual meeting on the National Plan for Productivity, Efficiency and Job Creation was held in Vancouver, Canada, between our National Miners Union and more than 40 companies from the mining, metalwork, car parts and general transport sectors that we hold contractual relationships with, from Mexico and the wider world.

A broad agenda of legal, technical and political issues faced by companies and their employees were addressed at the meeting, such as the challenge represented by Donald Trump taking office in the United States, and the economic competition posed by China through its subsidised steel exports, which affects opportunities for the steel and metalwork industries in Mexico and across the globe.

As the union's leader, during my contribution to the opening session I underlined the meeting's main objectives as: possible solutions for tackling day to day corporate operations and policy challenges; protecting employment and increasing the number of decent jobs, and as such improving company productivity; guaranteeing the full rights of all workers in our organisation; addressing the issues of poor security and hygiene in workplaces; and considering dialogue and flexibility as the bases for greater understanding.

I reiterated that in the trade union environment, we the miners have found a way to comprehend and face changes in a country where there are not enough job opportunities, and as such we have defended the rights of workers in spite of the problems of the market, the lack of a clear and effective government policy and indeed the challenges inherent in conducting our own activities, of avoiding conflicts and acting with a real sense of responsibility for resolving differences.

I underlined that, unlike pro-government or corporate trade unions, the miners union is a group firmly committed to defending human rights and the labour conditions of its members, with a particular emphasis on health and safety. A worker must feel sure that his or her working conditions are suitable, even if they are involved in a high risk role.

I made it clear that it is actions like these that distinguish us from corporate organisations, which do not protect the health and wellbeing of their workers. Companies need to realise that there is no machinery that can replace manual labour in the mining sector and industry at large, as



without the human factor in production we will never be able to achieve progress. We unions and companies need each other, and this requires a more fair and equitable mentality whereby not everything is simply a matter of production and profit. Exploitation and injustice must no longer be the status quo: from now on, we want a more secure, steady future that will benefit everyone.

The miners' union is the only trade union in Mexico and the entire world that arranges these types of events under its own initiative, events that promote communication and dialogue between workers and business owners. We do this in spite of the campaign of lies and attempts to discredit us led by some corporations in cahoots with various members of government.

I stated that the trade union's very purpose is to provide support, and our aim is to protect the basic rights of workers. Trade unionism does not exist to oppose companies; we have shown that by working side by side we can both prosper. The miners union is not an obstacle to achieving productivity, equality and social peace.

The participating companies from the mining, metalwork and other sectors are both Mexican and international, and the meeting was a unique encounter for the nation and the wider world. Capital and employment factors of production came together to agree on a joint effort for achieving shared goals necessary for coexistence and cooperation, in order to find ways to ensure decent jobs, as well as to promote efficiency and productivity for workers and companies alike.

The meeting was characterised by a spirit of cooperation and shared responsibility amongst employers and workers within the sector, with a focus on resolving differences through dialogue and negotiation, rather than confrontation and conflict. This is what Mexico needs at its current stage of development, although this must not lead to a lack of mutual respect, above all for the interests and rights of workers.

With the encouragement of the delegates, we once again stated firmly that the mining conflict must come to an end, by way of positive statements and actions in this direction by the government of Mexico, its public servants and their various dependents. These actions will need to allow things to return to normal, such as enabling me to return to Mexico with my family, with complete legal security and integrity for us and mining workers, given that the false accusations made against us unjustly and arbitrarily were thrown out by the courts over two years ago.

It's time for politics to change, and for government and businesses to show dignity and respect for all Mexicans.