

The Challenges of Transformation

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Throughout my life I have had the good fortune to have lived alongside many of the world's great leaders, and this bolsters the sense of satisfaction I feel at being back in my home country once more as a member of the Senate and at the head of the National Miners Union, one of Mexico's most democratic institutions, to serve the projects of national reconstruction and the economic, political and social transformation towards a new society.

The task at hand is neither easy nor simple, and even less so in light of the challenge of changing the dominant economic political model and getting rid of a system riven with the widespread inefficiencies, corruption, inequality, poverty and insecurity that are currently the norm in our country. This next phase is a serious struggle to eliminate the injustices and impunity that have become cancers afflicting the majority of the population. Justice and the rule of law need to be properly enforced if we are to ensure certainty and direction for the nation's development strategy.

In the labour world, many years ago we resolved that if capitalism globalises, then trade unions and the working class must also globalise their objectives and internationalise the fight to defend their rights and secure a better standard of living. In fact, there is a common saying among members of trade union organisations, that an offence against one is an offence against us all, which reinforces solidarity in the struggle for democracy, freedom and justice, in turn generating greater unity across borders.

A report by British experts recently found that the world's eight richest people possess a fortune equivalent to more than fifty per cent of the world's entire wealth. This same study, whilst emphasising the great concentration of wealth in very few hands, also underlines the fact that despite such personal material fortunes, these individuals lack a certain human quality, and this quality is solidarity. As the general secretary of Unite Len McCluskey –the largest and most powerful trade union in the United Kingdom and Ireland– says, solidarity is what circulates and flows freely through the veins of trade unionists worldwide.

The fact is there is more in common between a worker in the manufacturing industries in Britain and Latin America, a steelworker in the United States and Canada and a coalminer in Australia than there is between any of the richest men of the world. We democratic leaders



represent a new hope for change, because we are constantly struggling against the injustices and abuses so often committed against the labour and human rights of those who are least protected.

In Mexico, the governments of the past 30 to 40 years have blown every opportunity presented to them to build and strengthen a solid economy based on stimulating and reinforcing the domestic market. Today we are up against a serious conflict that we will only be able to get out of if we all accept the change that is to come, and then participate in the process constructively and with optimism. Andrés Manuel López Obrador has stated things very clearly: we are headed right for Mexico's fourth historic transformation. Let us join forces to rebuild the national economy, over and above any differences or resentments that might otherwise exist. The nation needs this now, and the future of this great country is crying out for it.