

First I'd like to thank the Woodrow Wilson Center, especially Andrew Selee and Robert Donnelly for organizing this opportunity to discuss the shared issues that states on both sides of the border are facing.

The U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnership is a collaborative, multi-branch alliance consisting of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Council of State Governments (CSG) and its Western and Southern regional offices, the Conference of Western Attorneys General (CWAG), the National Association of State Treasurers (NAST), the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) and other agencies. Its goal is to strengthen cooperation among state officials and institutions in the United States and Mexico. The Alliance Partnership promotes and convenes binational exchanges and workshops among border legislators, attorneys general and treasurers that enhance the role of state officials in addressing shared public policy concerns.

The Alliance Partnership promotes the integration of activities and outreach with other binational mechanisms so that concrete policy objectives and reforms can be achieved through a strategic, multi-branch and multi-jurisdictional approach. The Alliance partners, their respective members, networks and linkages comprise a broad and influential coalition that can effect change. The Alliance Partnership is an innovative mechanism of cooperation that enables dynamic synergies and cross-jurisdictional collaboration.

Financial support for the Alliance Partnership is provided by a grant from USAID, along with significant in-kind and direct support by participating partners and their respective member states, as well as financial contributions by private sector stakeholders. The Alliance Partnership is administered by the Council of State Governments.

The specific goals of the Attorney General component of the Alliance Partnership are to strengthen and expand binational collaborative relationships among state attorneys general of Mexico and the United States, particularly through binational policy exchanges and capacity training seminars.

Binational exchanges bringing together attorneys general from U.S. and Mexican states took place in 2008 and 2009, and annual exchanges are planned for the future. These interactions have resulted in policy makers and law enforcement authorities in both countries passing legislation addressing issues of trafficking in arms, drugs, and human beings, increasing penalties for violations, and developing legal mechanisms and cooperative efforts to disrupt the “business” of the cartels.

A primary legal objective of the AP has been to address rampant money laundering by the cartels in the United States. The CWAG Attorneys General through the Alliance Partnership, at the request of Mexico’s federal attorney general’s office, are sharing investigative and tracking techniques which will significantly impact the cash revenue flowing to the cartels. In 2009, the

New Mexico, Texas and Arizona Legislatures all passed initiatives in one or all of their legislative bodies addressing money laundering and trafficking issues.

Through its capacity building seminars, CWAG has conducted 10 training programs for Prosecutors and Investigators from Mexican State and Federal Attorneys General's Offices, training over 350 people to date. With 11 more trainings scheduled through the end of the year, over 600 more prosecutors and investigators will participate in upcoming seminars. By partnering with State Attorneys General's office and such institutions as the Northwestern School of Law, we are able to offer trial advocacy courses with experienced and committed trial attorneys who are enthusiastic about the opportunity to make a difference in the delivery of justice in Mexico.

Our forensic training and technical assistance program has kicked off the year hosting forensics laboratory directors and staff from 26 jurisdictions in Mexico. Over 100 forensic scientists from Mexican states will participate in upcoming trainings, including 2 intensive DNA "train the trainer" workshops at California State University Los Angeles this summer. In addition, prosecutors, investigators and lab technicians throughout Mexico and the United States will soon have access to online DNA courses, in English and Spanish, through the CWAG web site, with ballistics courses in development. The CWAG web site's Forensics section will be online within the next week, and will be the premier internet location for current, accurate and comprehensive forensic science information in Spanish.

A judicial training component is in development, which will add key support for Mexico's adoption of an oral advocacy system, by offering courtroom management skills to judicial officers at all levels of Mexico's court system. Over 100 judicial officers will be invited to take advantage of our programs this year alone.

In summary, more than 1,000 Mexican legal professionals will receive training in more than a dozen capacity building courses throughout the year.

Under the constitutional reforms passed in 2008 and being implemented on a state-by-state basis in Mexico, oral trials will become the norm in Mexican courtrooms. The judges, prosecutors, investigators and forensic scientists who participate in CWAG's trainings will be the founding fathers and mothers of oral advocacy in Mexico. A transparent and accountable legal system will allow for the growth of trust in the justice system among the citizens of Mexico, as well as promote social and economic stability throughout Mexican society. These social advances will provide immediate and tangible benefits to citizen north of the border, as crime decreases and prosperity increases.

As Chair of CWAG, it has been my pleasure to preside over the expansion of Alliance Partnership training programs, in support of the efforts of the Mexican people to implement their criminal justice system reforms.