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CEREMONY OF THE SIXTEENTH INTERNATIONAL
CONGRESS OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES

Mister President of the Executive Committee of the International
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Members of the Consultative Council of the Sixteenth International
Congress of Administrative Sciences

Mister President of the Organizing Committee

Honorable Organizing Committee

Distinguished Participants

Ladies

Gentlemen

It was the wish of the President of the Republic to be personally here, with you, in order to declare that we, the Mexican people, appreciate the fact that our country has been selected to be the site of this encounter and to offer you his most hearty welcome.

President Echeverría is visiting at this moment, as you will know, our fellow countries in Latin America, seeking that the motives of ethnic, linguistic and historic affinities, may be summed up, to those economic interests which are common to our countries, and should also unite us in order that, in better conditions, we might continue fighting, so that our raw materials and manufactured products which we now start to export should be better paid by industrialized countries and also aiming that financial credits, technology and manufactures with which they provide us should not cause an excessive profit and neither be an instrument of domination.

In order to contribute this aims with an indispensable efficiency and practical sense, he has proposed the creation of a Latin American

organization which will guide a common action in the economy of our countries and shall be steered exclusively by strict representation of our countries' sovereignty.

He asked me to be here and express to you, knowing beforehand the results of previous Congresses, his assurance that the dialogue beginning today will be a prolific encounter and discussion of theories and experiences about public administration.

The country which now is honored in receiving you, possesses a rich tradition originated in two cultures, the indian and the european. Its territory shelters resources which permit the autosufficiency in many aspects, and its inhabitants take great care in the construction of a deserving, pacific and equitable life.

It is true it has accumulated problems, lack of equilibria, and needs, all throughout the centuries, in spite of the efforts to overcome them. Inequality in the distribution of income; a not always rational exploitation of resources; population growth without such a responsibility as requires modern society; lack of employment; concentration of industry and demography, as well as that of opportunities in only a few cities; backwardness and lack of inhabitants in vast regions of the country, are only some of the problems which we now confront, apart of by international economic crises, which have had a negative repercussion in developing countries.

But, in order to win over them, Mexico postulates through its Constitution a concept of democracy, a praising of national values, and a humanistic attitude.

According to this concept, democracy does not exhaust itself in the legal structure and the political regime, because it is viewed as a way of life founded in a permanent economic, social and cultural improvement of every mexican.

The praising of what is national implies the attention to our problems, the exploitation and defense of our resources, the securing of our political and economic independence and the continuity and growth of our culture.

The humanistic attitude comprehends a full respect towards the dignity of individuals, the integrity of the family, the general interests of society and the fraternity and equality for all mankind.

The mexican political regime, founded in these principles, is republican, federal and democratic; it has a governmental organization which can resume itself, in the federal level in the traditional branches of Government: a Jurisdictional one, a Legislative one composed by the Chamber of Deputies, which is integrated by the representatives

of the people, and by the Chamber of Senators, in which the States of the Union and the Federal District are represented; and an Executive Power, bestowed on the President of the Republic, who is aided by 23 branch offices, which divide themselves in 15 Ministers of "Secretaries", 4 Administrative Departments, 2 Attorneys General and 2 Governments of Federal Territories. The inhabitants of the two latter, by the way, have pledged recently that this entities have already gathered together the necessary requirements in order to change to be States, and it is possible they will soon be able to accomplish this goal.

The federal public administration includes a numerous group of public organizations and agencies, enterprises with State participation and coordinative and participative mechanisms of all kinds, which in numerous cases include delegates of the private and social sectors.

In accordance to the exposed principles and institutional structure we are determined that public administration respond to our real time and space with the purpose of offering idoneous instruments to Government and society, so that they may accomplish their respective objectives.

The present public administration, in fullfilment of governmental policies, contributes to the implementation of political and economical solutions which Mexico requires on this days, as well as those which we forecast for the future.

In this job we appreciate the assesment of technicians, and we assimilate the models for "development" or "change" administration which are akin with the general expectations and the political and social organization of the country.

We are aware that the best government programmes, the most generous development plans, even if they include the equitable redistribution of development benefits. often get overwhelmed by administrative inefficiency; but also that the most efficient organization of public administration can befall in thecnocracy or in an open negation of our values.

This is why we think that, only if we start from through the requirements of our own experiences, we will be able to avoid the imposition of models, methods and technologies alien to our public administration and foreign to our identity and which may not suffice the true needs of our country.

We are searching for a flexible and interrelated public administration, which would not be able to be adjust to the focussing of an only one and single perspective, because it is aimed to accomplish

governmental programs founded in the Constitution, which obliges to strengthen at the same time the political, economical, social and cultural democracy; it is aimed to find a solution to national problems; to exploit and defend natural resources; to assure the economic and political independence; to onserve and enlarge culture; to guarantee the dignity of every individual and the preeminence of general interest over the particular one.

Starting from thes principles, the present Government has intended to increase the economical growth securing, at the same time, a redistribution of income, under the understanding that it is not acceptable for it to exist an inevitable dilemma between the economical expansion and the distribution of income.

In view of this, a line of action has been started tending towards a shared development for all sectors of society, which would also be balanced according to the different regions of the country; to propiciate the creation of employments; to regulate demographic growth by means of persuasion; to add up new ways of political expression and participation; to widen the network of physical communication; to strenghten public finance; to foster exploitation; to guarantee the acquisitive power of the people; to reform integrally the systems of public instruction and training; to rearrange the international transactions; to implement a vast schedule of decentralization in every order, including deconcentration, delegation and devolution in the administrative field.

Within this overall framework, the reform of mexican public administration can be situated.

It has been foreseen as a participative function and not as a coercive, authoritative one. It is launched by a political decision and in its definition and execution concur the services responsible for administrative action, coordinated by a central organism.

The job of improving the federal public administration is in the hands of all public servants. There are ample means by which they may propose solutions and put them into practice.

We are aware there are disadvantages in this participative system, but the mexican way of life, interwoven by a democratic sense in every aspect, demands a freedom of expression, an enriching controversy, a criticism and a selfcriticism, a fruitful dialogue, and a dynamic consensus to which the other aspects lead. This process is, most probably, very tiring and long, but the only compatible with the character of our people who appreciate freedom above all things.

Democratic sense, together with operational needs, drives the re-

form of the Administration to be made with the involved and responsible intervention of those who know better the problems and solutions. Only this way, public servants are the subject and not the object or reform.

One of the basic aspects of these tasks is intimately linked to the first theme of this encounter.

In respect to "The Administrative Aspects of Regionalization" the Mexican policy is given by the federal form of state assumed, which determines the political and administrative territorial division of the country.

Nevertheless, the tendency towards concentration, imposed by economic and social factors, has affected the federalist principles by limiting development to just a few areas, with which vast geographic regions have been relegated.

President Luis Echeverría's Administration has faced this problem with diverse means. Some, in order to incorporate to development and to national life those regions which are the most socially and economically depressed; and other institutional ones, in order to provide the States and Territories with instruments to participate in those federal decisions which concern them.

To this effect, a schedule of federal investment by federative entities has been promoted, with the participation of local governments and local social sectors, in committees aimed to integrated local development.

The federal public investment in the rural areas has been one of the most effective instruments for economic decentralization. In fact, during the last decades, only a 13% of the aforementioned investment was directed to rural areas. In 1970, for example, federal public investment amounted to 29 thousand 200 million pesos, and the amount aimed to rural areas came up to only 3 thousand 900 million — now, President Echeverría has promoted changes which are not only quantitative but also qualitative; he has given guidances towards a new economic development strategy, and this is how, in this present year, in which the authorized federal public investment amounts to 65 thousand 200 million pesos, the part aimed towards the rural zones represents 11 thousand million, in other words a 17%, in this way tripling itself, in benefit of the rural areas.

On the other hand, economic decentralization is promoted through the establishment of industrial parks in strategic sites; through the creation of industries for processing raw materials in places near to those in which they are produced and, in general terms, by means of

stimulating activities in other places than the great urban concentrations.

At the same time, we have endeavoured that, when the characteristics of the institutions recommend it, the important decisions should be taken in offices the federal agencies have in each capital city of every State or, at least, in regional sites. Thus, it activates the relations of the people with the government and permits them to exercise their rights and keep their obligations in places near to their residence.

The measures, among others, tend to overcome the regional lacks of equilibrium; to generalize all throughout the country a deserving level of life, with equal opportunities in education, health and employment; and to strengthen the capacity of decision of the medium sized and small communities, federated States and municipal authorities.

The second theme we will revise here at the Congress, will have a special interest, in as much it will enable a sharing of experiences between our developing countries, in order to help each other in resolving huge problems.

About the necessary specific differences concerning approaches, methods or achievements of our administrative evolutions, on one thing we are certain: our countries, overwhelmed by unequal international transactions, ruinous financial credits, investment and transfer of technology which sharper their impoverishment, decapitalize them and postpone the solutions for their problems, they should not be charged with the additional cost of an inefficient administration, wasteful and, on some occasions, disloyal to the expectations for justice and independence of their people.

The third theme, "Administrative Methods and Institutions Used to Forecast the Effects of Economic and Social Changes" arises in us, also, reflexions.

The observation, prognosis and inducement to change must be made, we believe, on the basis of the historical realities and what national communities wish to become; overcoming, thus the tendency which makes the countries in development only followers of the footsteps, patterns and models of the developed ones.

An erroneous outlining of social change originates political, social and cultural unbalances, and sharpens the dependency of our countries.

In this order of ideas, it is indispensable, in order to overcome home problems, always conditioned by the international reality, a

transformation of the treatment, cooperation, and exchanges between the nations.

Because of this, President Echeverría has proposed indispensable principles in order to overcome the domination which is imposed from the power centers of the world, and obtain fair and convenient conditions in commerce, in financial credits and in international cooperation so that they may prove propitious for an equal distribution of goods and products retaining, thus, the rights of the peoples to organize and govern themselves, and to preserve their national features, by means of practicing a non-interventional attitude of any country in the affairs of another.

This is the meaning of his initiative on a Charter for Economic Dues and Rights of the States, tending to establish regulations and mechanisms which will secure economic independence of the countries, in view of the activity of international economic powers.

Among the principles which includes this project we find some which are the products of a large experience in defense of our sovereignty: free disposition of natural resources; unrestricted respect of the right that each country has to adopt the most convenient economical structure and to impress on private property the modalities which the public interest dictate; to renounce to the employment of instruments and economic pressures to reduce the sovereignty of the States; subordination of foreign capital to the laws of the country to which it resorts; express prohibition to the transnational corporations to intervene in the internal affairs of the countries; abolition of the commercial practices which discriminate the exports of non-industrialized countries; agreements which guarantee the stability and the fair price of basic products; ample and adequate transmission of the technological and scientific advancements, at a lower cost, and with more promptness to the backward countries, and larger amounts of resources at long term, low interest rate and without tyings, for financing development.

After being presented this initiative, before the Third Conference of the United Nations on Commerce and Development, and after weary negotiations in a special committee of this organism, there has been a noticeable, enthusiastic and constructive attitude of the peoples and governments under conditions, and with aspirations similar to ours, and of those others which understand these solidarity principles. But, at the same time, it has been quite clear that there is a great misunderstood and a lack of perspective of some of the great economic powers which pretend to postpone the establishment of a new interna-

tional order that includes the active participation of the countries of the Third World, which groups more than two thirds of mankind.

This situation cannot be alien to those who, in making an effort in giving the nations better administrative organizations, share, also, the feelings of brotherhood and justice among peoples.

Our elders knew how to procure knowledge; they made the efforts and developed the ability which was required to respond adequately to the necessities of their time; because of this, while recognizing achievements, in the administrative and humanistic fields, we render homage to all those, who famous or anonymous, have rendered their life to the service of administration.

In the trajectories of these men, and in the duties of those who still continue their endeavours there has been the presence of an important challenge between the mere search for efficiency and the basic purpose it has to serve the aims of reality; between the zeal of modernization and the traditional resistences towards change between the exaggeratedly pure technical approaches and the practical approach demanded by the ancestral wants of countries; between the indispensable control of administrative process and the speed which imposes and requires contemporary life; in brief, between the endeavour of improving the organization, which if exaggerated neglects important factors, and the necessity, compelling in our countries, of accomplishing social goals and programs.

We hope that the works of the Congress yield the satisfactory results we expect.

And as to us, the host country, even before initiating these labors, we can congratulate ourselves for having received concrete benefits from this encounter, having propitiated the actualization of the studies concerning our own public administration which have been included in a recent number of the International Institute Review and in the papers which will be presented to you.

The celebration of this triennial Congress, for the first time in a Latin American country, has also led Mexico to be the site for the First Interamerican Seminar on Administrative Reform, which produced a rich and promising exchange of experiences.

In reasserting our hopes for the success of your work, it is very pleasant for me to declare formally inaugurated, in the name of the President of the Mexican United States, today, July the 22nd, 1974, the Sixteenth International Congress of Administrative Sciences.