

Congressman Benjamin Robles

The Fight for Food, the Fight for a New World Order

This is a translation of the transcript of the presentation of Mexican Federal Congressman Benjamin Robles Montoya to Panel 3, “End the Casino Economy Before It’s Too Late,” of the Schiller Institute’s April 15-16 Conference, “Without the Development of All Nations, There Can Be No Lasting Peace for the Planet.” Congressman Robles served in Mexico’s Senate from 2012-2016 and has been a federal congressman since 2019; he is President of Mexico’s National College of Economists.

Subheads have been added.

Thank you. Good morning, here in Mexico, and good afternoon to all of my friends that have joined online, friends from around the planet! Citizens of the world, unite!

If you allow me, I would like to begin my remarks by reiterating the call issued on November 16 of last year, 2022, for all legislators, Presidents of nations, leaders of the world, to move forward on the appeal issued by the Schiller Institute with the objective of denouncing and putting an end to the danger of a nuclear confrontation.

Since that time, the identification of the sources of those threats has made it possible to achieve greater clarity about the urgency of multiplying the antiwar efforts and set in motion the first actions of what we could call a new order in favor of peace and progress of the peoples. We are truly pleased—those of us who, from Mexico, follow these actions—we are pleased with the results. But we must note, as well, that the nuclear danger, and now also the food disaster, have not ceased, which requires us to quicken our pace.

That’s why I’d like to tell each and every one of you about what is happening in my country, and the first cases of coordination with the nations of Latin Ameri-



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ca. I’d like to inform you that a few days ago I issued an extensive and respectful letter of congratulations to the President of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, for having initiated a direct dialogue with Presidents from the Caribbean and Latin America, to search for paths to resolve the problem of inflation in various nations in the world, using the nations of Latin America as a base.

Inflation Fight Presented to President AMLO

What am I referring to, concretely? To two things: to the problems of the lack of production and supply of food; and to the need for a just financial system, a democratic, inclusive and solidary financial system that can resolve these problems, and many others as well.

I issued the congratulations in my capacity as President of the National College of Economists of Mexico. In that regard, I would like to say that we Mexican economists had already proposed similar measures going back to January 1 of the prior year, 2022. We sent numerous letters to President López Obrador, to our country’s Finance Minister, presenting ideas, actions to combat inflation—that unusual growth in prices that has happened in many parts of the world, when the economy started accelerating after having stagnated due to the pandemic.

Allow me to share with you a bit of the recent history of the fight for food survival which is happening here in Mexico, because it reflects the idea, dear friends, that in order to solve this problem we must have a world perspective.

In January 2022, we Mexican economists proposed a Short-Term Anti-Inflationary Plan to President López Obrador, which included nine points, at a time when the prices of production, as I mentioned, were still quite stable. Few believed that there would be spiral-

ing inflation, but as we predicted, soon enough, in three months, prices suddenly began to rise. The government launched a containment strategy, characterized by subsidizing gasoline prices and reaching an agreement with businessmen to freeze prices of food and other basic consumer goods. A little later, in light of potential shortages, the government decided to open its trade borders, dropping tariffs on an additional number of goods.

But inflation did not let up much; it hardly paused, and the possibility of growth remained dormant. Moreover, this happened while there was an aggressive rise in interest rates. The central bankers of the world have taken that monetary policy route, with significant increases. And in these circumstances, President López Obrador last April 5 called on the Latin American nations to initiate an alliance in favor of food production and a new world financial order.

Measures for Food Security Worldwide

But I would like to add something, friends. That step seems excellent, but there are other parts of the planet where this situation of food poverty is even worse, and that's why a worldwide reordering is urgent. I'd like to say that, as an economist, I understand the importance of analyzing the growing inflation of food prices around the world, and also the need to do something about it, to face this challenge. And for that I propose that we jointly consider some actions, some measures, such as:

Create an international alliance to address food price inflation around the world.

Establish common objectives and frameworks to ensure that all nations act in concert.

Carry out detailed studies and analyses to better understand the causes of the inflation of food prices.

Develop macroeconomic policies that promote economic stability and contain inflation.

Establish programs to encourage the development of agriculture in the regions with the highest rates of inflation.

Promote investment in agricultural infrastructure and technology to improve productivity and lower costs.

Establish measures to control prices in order to

guarantee that consumers can have access to food at affordable prices.

Develop a system to monitor food prices in order to quickly detect price increases and take necessary measures.

Establish channels of communication with small producers and farmers to understand their problems and needs, and make new proposals in that regard.

Encourage fair trade to make sure that producers are adequately remunerated for their work.

Implement measures to support farmers who suffer losses as a result of external factors, such as climate change.

Establish measures to reduce food wastage and increase efficiency in the supply chain.

Develop financial education and training programs for producers and for persons in charge of food distribution.

Promote the use of IT and communications technology to improve the efficiency of the supply chain.

Establish social safety nets for those who find themselves most affected by food price inflation.

And, of course, promote investment in research and development.

These are some of the actions which I raise for consideration, so that in the near future we might discuss them, enrich them. To have a discussion which is academic in nature, but fundamentally economic, so that we can contribute to addressing the world phenomenon of the unusual growth of prices, after the COVID-19 pandemic we lived through.

So, I don't want to extend my remarks any further. I therefore greet you, friends from around the world, and I take my leave suggesting that this conference might produce a statement addressed to the Latin American Presidents, to the authorities who are going to meet in Mexico this coming May 5 and 6 to continue to detail this Strategic Alliance of Latin American Countries Against Inflation. I believe that it might even be worthwhile to discuss whether or not delegates might be able to be present at that summit. And so, I take my leave with the phrase which I often use here in my country: The fight will go on—yes, it will go on—until things change. Thank you very much for your attention, and greetings.