

## Strategic Border Infrastructure Forum

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### ***Institutional Context***

The governments of Mexico and the U.S. are investing to modernize the border infrastructure through technology that could help stop the transfer of weapons, fentanyl and money by improving the customs system. The Strategic Border Infrastructure Forum is a binational mechanism through which both nations discuss pathways, opportunities and challenges in pursuing this modernization. In 2022, the gathering was held in Tijuana, and resulted in the announcement of 20 development projects along the border, 14 by Mexico and 6 by the U.S. The combined investment amounts to US\$4.2 billion, of which US\$700 million has already been approved for spending.

### ***Strategic Border Infrastructure Forum<sup>1</sup>***

Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard and United States Ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar led the Strategic Border Infrastructure Forum on May 12th. The meeting took place in Tijuana, Baja California, and aimed to promote the work carried out by both countries to modernize the existing infrastructure and build new ports of entry. This will contribute to the economic growth of the cities on the border strip of both countries.

The Forum, which was also attended by the Governor of Baja California, Marina del Pilar Ávila Olmeda, and the Under Secretary of State for the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Todd Robinson, discussed border infrastructure projects between Mexico and the United States. The projects will boost economic growth and improve living conditions for people living in the border region. In particular, the Mesa de Otay II–Otay Mesa East International Crossing project will generate a new high-tech port of entry that will decongest the area's crossing system and significantly reduce inspection times. Likewise, on the Chihuahua–New Mexico border, the modernization of the San Jerónimo–Santa Teresa Crossing and its access roads will speed up the crossing and will represent an alternative to relocate the commercial traffic that currently crosses the Ciudad Juárez–El Paso urban area.

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<https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/mexico-y-ee-uu-anuncian-modernizacion-de-puertos-de-entrada-en-frente-ra-binacional-para-impulsar-crecimiento-economico?idiom=es>

The Mexican delegation, led by Foreign Minister Ebrard, was made up of the head of the Unit for North America, Roberto Velasco Álvarez; the head of the Foreign Minister's Office, Daniel Millán Valencia; the general director of Political Coordination, Ximena Escobedo Juárez; the consul general of Mexico in San Diego, Carlos González Gutiérrez; as well as representatives of the Secretariat of Infrastructure, Communications and Transportation; Secretary of National Defense; National Customs Agency of Mexico; Institute for the Administration of Appraisals and National Assets; and the Mexican Section of the International Boundary Commission.

On behalf of the United States, the coordinator of Border Affairs, Hillary Quam, and the Border Affairs officer, Paul Ghiotto, both from the Office of Western Hemisphere Affairs, participated; the US Consul General in Tijuana, Thomas Reott; as well as representatives of the US Embassy in Mexico; US Consulate General in Tijuana; Department of Homeland Security; Customs and Border Protection Office; General Services Administration and the Department of Transportation.