

MEXICO ON TRUMP: NUMBER OF TOURISTS SHALL NOT FALL



While the diplomatic relations between Mexico and the U.S. have gone unstable in recent months, the head of Mexican board points out the importance of the number of tourists crossing every year the border to holiday in the U.S. According to him, the industry has no reason to be worried now.

It is in no one's interest to have a tourism war with the United States because **every year 18 million Mexicans travel there and bring an economic benefit of 20 billion dollars, according to Tourism Secretary Enrique de la Madrid Cordero.**

Although diplomatic and economic relations between Mexico and the United States have reached a rocky phase since US President Donald Trump took office on January 20 and declared that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will be renegotiated and that he will build a wall at the border between the two countries, the federal official declared that so far there is no indication of a need to worry about the tourism sector.

"It's in all our interests. I'm saying this in order to try to put it bluntly; when others are not being very cautious then you have to be cautious. Neither does it suit any of us to turn this into a tourism war because actually 18 million of us Mexicans go to the United States every year and spend more than 20 billion dollars. The industry in that country is also quite worried and many states in the American union depend on tourists from Mexico. I hope we don't get to that point," said De la Madrid at a meeting with the board of directors of the Business Coordinating Council (CCE).

The official said that the Mexican strategy will continue to be to strengthen the local tourism product which is concentrated in only 8 destinations, and to seek to achieve greater diversity in the number of tourists coming to explore the country.

He said that in 2016 the number of US tourists grew, as well as the number of visitors from Latin America, which has increased by 75 per cent in the 4 years of the current administration.

"We have to look for more foreign visitors, from Asia - we're thinking mainly of China, South Korea and Japan as well as European visitors."

However, he said that they will also improve the connectivity, more flights and more local tourist attractions, because **85 cents of every peso that is spent on tourism consumption in the country comes from Mexicans.**

"We will continue promoting the "Let's all travel within Mexico" programme and also the policy of promoting Mexican cuisine," he noted.

While acknowledging that "it would be false to say that there's no uncertainty" because of Trump's proposals, he said that's the general feeling all over the world and so far there's no reason to think that the number of tourists coming from the United States will change.

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