



**A Speech  
by  
the President of Iceland  
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson  
at  
a luncheon held in his honour  
by the President of Mexico  
Felipe Calderón Hinojosa  
during a State Visit to Mexico  
11 March 2008**

Your Excellency President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa  
and Madam Margarita Zavala Gómez del Campo,  
Distinguished guests,  
Dear friends.

Your warm welcome and friendship towards me and my nation are a true reflection of the inspiring spirit of Mexico which I first came to enjoy and appreciate decades ago.

It has been one of the great privileges of my life to engage in close cooperation with many distinguished leaders of your great country, to be enriched by its culture and customs and to witness how the people of Mexico eagerly seek paths towards prosperity and progress.

If my Presidency is deemed to have any value, it will be partly thanks to the training I acquired in my younger years by watching Mexican leaders and representatives in action. The distinguished diplomat and Nobel Peace Prizewinner Alfonso García Robles was humble enough to treat me as a pupil, and the dialogue which President Miguel de la Madrid established with us, a few idealistic parliamentarians from different parts of the world, led in the 1980s to the success of the Six Nations Peace Initiative.

Here today I should like to express my profound gratitude to my Mexican mentors and my many Mexican friends, my admiration for how, in the depth of the Cold War, Mexico showed initiative, courage and

imagination, demonstrated ways towards new treaties and agreements, towards a more cooperative and peaceful world.

In this new century, mankind eagerly seeks and requires leadership born of the same qualities, searching for solutions to the most fundamental challenge of our times, the threat of climate change, which is so evident in the melting of the ice sheets and the glaciers and the rising sea levels all over the world.

Due to the Gulf Stream, Mexico and Iceland are closely linked in this endeavour. Flowing from Mexico into the North–Atlantic, the Gulf Stream encircles my country and constitutes the core of the conveyor belt of ocean currents which in every continent regulates the climate.

Cooperation between our countries is therefore both urgent and is endowed with symbolic value, reminding us how all nations now share a common fate, but also demonstrating to others new ways towards solutions.

By focussing on the future of energy, we provide a constructive way to analyse the threat of climate change. In this respect Iceland has shown how, within the lifetime of one generation, a country can create a comprehensive clean energy system and thus transform the basis of its economic progress.

Like Iceland, Mexico is blessed with rich clean energy resources and can also harness its extensive geothermal potentials.

My visit is a firm indication of our willingness to cooperate with Mexico in such endeavours, and the representatives of Icelandic energy companies, banks, universities and technical institutions who are accompanying me on this visit will all be at your service.

The success of our cooperation in the field of clean energy could inspire other nations to seek concrete solutions and measures by which, through collaboration, we can fend off the disasters which climate change has brought onto our horizon.

The people of Iceland also see the Gulf Stream in another light. We bless it for the warmth it brings to the shores of our island, making Iceland's weather milder than the name of the country might suggest.

This gratitude towards Mexico is ingrained in our culture and we also realize that the richness of the oceans is a gift which the Almighty has bestowed on both our countries.

In dialogues with many Mexican friends over the years I have often emphasized the opportunities which lie in the utilisation of ocean

resources and how Icelandic-Mexican cooperation could further development in both the eastern and the western coastal regions of Mexico.

The world market is now eagerly calling for more fish products, and Icelandic technology and training could bring various advantages to our Mexican partners.

Our countries could also work together in other ways, in the promotion of creative culture, by establishing joint projects in science and technology, in strengthening the bonds between our universities, and in making a healthy lifestyle a core value for our children, utilising media and community-based action programmes developed in Iceland.

All these endeavours are incorporated in the agenda of my visit, the first State Visit by a President of Iceland to Mexico, which I sincerely hope will both strengthen and broaden the foundation of our cooperation.

In my heart I feel this journey is like a personal homecoming, enabling me to express my gratitude and respect to the people of Mexico.

In the spirit of our friendship, I ask the distinguished guests to rise and lift your glasses in honour of President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa and Madam Margarita Zavala Gómez del Campo and to the growing cooperation between our countries.