



**A Speech
by
the President of Iceland
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson
at
a Welcoming Ceremony
at the Palacio Nacional
during
his State Visit to Mexico
11 March 2008**

Your Excellency President Felipe Calderón,
Madam Margarita Zavala,
Distinguished gathering.

My arrival here today marks a new era in our cooperation, and I am deeply honoured to be the first President of Iceland to come on a State Visit to Mexico, a country which for decades has been close to my heart, the home of so many friends and inspiring partners.

The productive cooperation I enjoyed with many distinguished leaders of your country taught me in my younger years how courage and imagination can pave the way to lasting solutions, how dialogue and concrete actions can produce results.

Hence my journey is, in a sense, a thanksgiving to my Mexican mentors, to the culture and the spirit of this great nation and to the people of Mexico, who have enlightened my soul and enriched my experience.

My visit also carries a message of how our countries must show the world a new way forward, how to deal with the greatest challenge of our times: the imminent threat of disastrous and irreversible climate change.

Due to the Gulf Stream, Mexico and Iceland are closely linked in this endeavor, but both are also blessed with rich natural resources that give us the potential to transform our energy systems.

Iceland has shown how a country can create a comprehensive clean energy economy. Now we have come to offer Mexico our partnership, technology, and experience, proving that a clean energy future can be both a vision and a reality.

We have also come to offer help in harnessing the richness of the ocean, in strengthening a sustainable and rewarding fishing sector in the coastal regions of your magnificent country, thus promoting the well-being and the prosperity of the Mexican people.

We have come to enjoy your creative culture, to marvel at your unique historical heritage and to learn how you make science and technology serve the quest for further progress.

To be inspired by Mexico has always for me been a great privilege, and it is thus with humility and gratitude in my soul that I thank you for your warm welcome. In the coming days we will, I hope, witness how the strength of our friendship can lay the foundations of productive cooperation in the years to come.