

## WORDS OF WELCOME

**Jose de Jesus Hernandez Ramos**  
Founding Member and Ex-President of  
*Familias y Sociedad*

Mrs. Margarita Zavala Gómez del Campo, President of the National System for Integral Family Development;

Mrs. Cecilia Romero Castillo, Commissioner for the National Migration Institute;

Dr. Richard Wilkins, Director General of the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development;

Mrs. Maria Elena Bribiesca, President of Family & Society;

Distinguished Consuls accredited in Mexico;

Members of Congress;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Welcome to Mexico and to the International Colloquium, "The Family of the Migrant Worker".

***"The strength of a nation lies within the integrity of its families."***

This phrase, uttered by Confucius in the sixth century BC, resonates with force today in a world threatened by the disintegration of the family in the face of violence, crisis, and lack of opportunities, violations of human rights, discouragement and despair.

This Colloquium has arisen from our concern for the family of the migrant worker. As organizers, we seek a more humane world, concerned for the families, mothers and fathers and children, who face the risks and challenges posed by migration.

This International Colloquium aims to identify the positive and negative effects of migration on the structure of the family, in order to promote the design and adoption of public policies that protect the families of migrants, that strengthen and encourage their development, as well as favoring their reunification in the country of origin or destination.

We consider it to be the shared responsibility of both state and society, with valuable input from academia, to discuss, identify and take the action necessary for the development, peace and welfare of the migrant family. Public policy on the issue of migration should aim to support the development of functional families, capable of meeting the basic needs of their members. The functional family is the engine of a prosperous, equitable society, wherein the state of law prevails and opportunities are provided for all citizens.

Gary Becker, Nobel Laureate in Economics, maintains that the family is where values such as laboriousness, honesty, reliability and discipline are learnt. These are the basis of human capital that provides the nation with the foundation for economic development and social progress. Economic development and social progress in turn contribute to the source of peace and welfare to which every family, and every one of its members, legitimately aspire.

This is why it is so important for governments to include the family perspective in their migration policies, for the good of both countries of origin and destination. This is why we need to address the family perspective of migration in the international arena, promoting fair bilateral agreements and the signing of multilateral instruments on the subject.

As organizers of this Colloquium, we trust in the family. We trust in both the nuclear family as well as the extended family's ability to care for their loved ones. We trust in their ability to form good citizens for society as a whole. As George Santayana, the

leading twentieth-century philosopher, said, "The family is one of Nature's masterpieces".

I would like to thank all the participants in this Colloquium for your collaboration. I would especially like to thank Mrs. Margarita Zavala, Mrs. Cecilia Romero, Dr. Richard Wilkins, Mrs. Maria Elena Bribiesca, and all the leading academics that will to enlighten us with their knowledge, and to all of you for your commitment to the family.