U.S. – MEXICO STATE ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIP

Report of Activities

October 1 – December 31, 2008
1st Quarterly Report
# U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnership

**Quarterly Report**  
First Quarter, October 1 – December 31, 2008  

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ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIP BACKGROUND

On September 23, 2008, the Council of State Governments (CSG) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) entered into a three-year cooperative, jointly funded agreement to implement the U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnership. The cooperative agreement was subsequently modified to extend activities to five years, September 23, 2008 – September 30, 2013.

The U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnership is a collaborative, multi-branch alliance comprising the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Council of State Governments (CSG) and its Western and Southern regional offices, Conference of Western Attorneys General (CWAG), National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), National Association of State Treasurers (NAST), National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) and other officials aimed at strengthening cooperation among state officials and institutions of the United States and Mexico. The Alliance Partnership promotes and convenes binational exchanges and workshops among border legislators, attorneys general and treasurers that enhance the role of state officials in addressing shared public policy concerns that transcend international borders.

The Alliance Partnership promotes the integration of activities and outreach with other binational mechanisms, as well as policy institutes and research universities, so that concrete policy objectives and reforms can be achieved through a strategic, multi-branch and multi-jurisdictional approach. The Alliance partners, their respective members, networks and linkages comprise a broad and influential coalition that can affect change. The Alliance Partnership is an innovative mechanism of cooperation that enables dynamic synergies and cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

REPORT OVERVIEW

This report highlights the activities of the second quarter for FY 2008-09 by CSG and the Alliance partners to promote and implement binational state exchanges as defined by the objectives of the U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnerships. The activities were carried out with the support of the USAID Mexico mission.

PROGRESS EVALUATION

The activities highlighted in this report illustrate CSG and its partner’s continued effort to make significant progress in achieving the program’s objectives, which are the following:

- Contribute to the objectives of the Merida Initiative related to continuing police education insofar as USAID has determined that “police” shall include state justice personnel;
- Strengthen and further expand binational exchanges and activities among state attorneys general of Mexico and the United States through the alliances established by CWAG, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), and Mexico’s
National Conference of Attorneys General, particularly through investigative and prosecutorial capacity training seminars;

- Enhance the ability of U.S. and Mexico border state legislatures to identify and enact strategies aimed towards performing an expanded policy role in addressing common concerns along the 2,000 mile border region through the ongoing implementation of the Border Legislative Conference (BLC); and

- Establish binational economic development forums among state executive branch officials, including Lt. Governors, Treasurers and others aimed at exchanging “best practices” and linkages in public finance strategies, infrastructure planning, access to capital and tourism, among others.

**Border Legislative Conference**

**Participation in Three Californias**

On October 9-11, 2008, the BLC Program Director attended the 9th Legislative Forum of the Three Californias in Monterey, California. The Forum, convened through the office of Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny, Vice Chair of the BLC, brought together legislators from the states of Baja California Sur, Baja California, and California to discuss issues of common interest such as fisheries and tourism. During the forum, Senator Ducheny informed participating legislators of the recent activities and policy positions of the BLC, including the 18th BLC that convened in Santa Monica, California.

**Participation in Border Energy Forum**

On October 23-24, 2008, Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny, Vice Chair of the BLC, attended the Border Energy Forum that was held in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. The Border Energy Forum included plenary and workshop sessions on sustainable energy, transportation fuels, clean technology, energy efficiency and water systems, electricity, financing energy projects and infrastructure and gasification technologies, among others. Senator Ducheny moderated the transportation fuels workshop session.

**National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators**

On November 14, 2008, the BLC Program Director attended and participated in an immigration panel during the Sixth Annual Summit of Hispanic Legislators in Las Vegas, Nevada. The forum was organized by the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL). The BLC program director provided an overview and perspective of the BLC policy positions on the topic of immigration. The panel included experts from the National Conference of State Legislatures and immigration organizations.
On December 4-5, 2008, the BLC Chair and Vice Chair, Diputado Francisco Cantu Torres and Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny respectively, attended and participated in the U.S. – Mexico Working Group on Border Management - “Improving Border Policies: A Strategic Vision for Competitive and Sustainable Development in the Border Region.” The Work Group meeting was held in Washington DC and was hosted by the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Mexico Institute and the Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF).

The U.S.-Mexico Working Group on border management addressed challenges facing border communities and participants discussed a range of bilateral and unilateral policy options, focusing on four principal areas of infrastructure, sustainable economic development, the environment and natural resources, and regional public security. The aim of the Working Group is to formulate a set of tentative policy proposals for both unilateral and bilateral actions for the improvement of border societies, environments, and economies.

The BLC Chair and Vice Chair participated on a roundtable focused on bilateral thinking, providing an opportunity to convey border concerns from a local perspective, as well as needed efforts to shape federal border policies that facilitate the secure and efficient movement of people and goods along land ports of entry. Besides the roundtable participation, the Working Group meeting offered the BLC officers an opportunity to meet academics and federal officials from the U.S. and Mexico working on bilateral issues.

Based on these discussions, the Woodrow Wilson International Center’s Mexico Institute, recently released a report highlighting the recommendations of the working groups on U.S. – Mexico relations. The report titled “the United States and Mexico: Towards a Strategic Partnership,” will serve as a point of reference as the Wilson Center will convene a series of forums that will provide follow-up on the issues of security cooperation, economic integration, immigration, and border management.

**Attorney General Component**

As part of the U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnership, program staff collaborated with the Conference of Western Attorneys General (CWAG) in the ongoing implementation of the attorney general element of the Partnership. This included the facilitation of signings of Memorandum of Understanding between the Attorney General of Baja California and the U.S. state Attorneys General from Oregon, Nevada, and Washington. Through these MOU’s, state attorneys general from Mexico and the U.S. pledge to share legal and educational knowledge and work towards conducting exchanges and trainings that assist Mexico state attorneys general in the administration of justice, management of criminal investigation, and prosecution of criminal offenders.

In addition, the CWAG staff planned and executed a training – A training on November 17-21, 2008 in Denver, Colorado, provided 13 law enforcement investigators from the Baja California Attorney General’s Office the opportunity to learn, among other things,
about the Colorado Criminal Justice System, conducted detective shadowing, learned about AMBER alerts, computer forensics, and techniques on the collection and preservation of evidence in a crime scene. The Baja California investigators were also exposed to a mock crime scene by the Adams County Sherriff’s Academy.

This training was part of the Alliance Partnership’s effort to assist Mexico law enforcement in the implementation of reforms to the Code of Criminal Procedures in several states. The Alliance Partners, CWAG and the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) will be planning and implementing several investigatory and prosecutorial trainings in the coming months.

**Outreach to Potential New Alliance Partners**

During the First Quarter of FY 08-09, CSG conducted outreach with potential new partners of the Alliance Partnership, including the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA), the Woodrow Wilson International Center, and Arizona State University. The idea of these partnerships is to enhance the engagement among state officials on economic development and finance reform issues, as well as add research capacity and improved federal relations to the Alliance Partnership portfolio. It is anticipated that formal agreements will be established with these entities during the second and third quarters of the 2008-09 fiscal year.