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Government Introduces "permanent Export Promotion Program"

by Steven Ranieri

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On Feb. 19, Trade Secretary Jaime Serra Puche announced implementation of the Permanent Export Promotion Program. One part of the program focuses on "active and successful negotiation in international forums" in order to shape agreements guaranteeing free, stable and permanent access of Mexican products to foreign markets, and to exploit comparative advantages in trade and investment. A second part of the initiative involves the removal of domestic obstacles to export activities, and the stimulation of competitiveness. Selected highlights of the program are summarized below. * Complete modernization of the railway system. * Construction of refrigerated warehouses in the nation's principal airports, operated by private concessions. * Development of a "national refrigeration network" to reduce transportation costs for fresh flower exports. * Temporary authorization for imports of components and machinery for the automotive and maquiladora industries, among others. * Expansion of the "large exporter" ("ALTEX") category of the Mixed Export Promotion Commission (COMPEX) to include any company which exports 40% of total sales or at least \$2 million annually. The ALTEX designation provides benefits to qualifying companies. Under the redefinition, companies fitting under the category will increase from about 200 to 400. * Guaranteed electricity service to export firms to reduce costs associated with voltage changes and temporary service suspension. * Exclusion of export revenue of less than \$50,000 in value from foreign revenue controls. * Expansion of deregulation and simplification of customs legislation. * Simplification of the value added tax (IVA) rebates to export firms and maquiladoras. * Development of a series of trade fairs and exhibitions to promote Mexican export products. * Development of a Foreign Trade Service Center designed to solve problems and provide services to exporters. According to Ernesto Warnholtz, president of the National Exporter-Importer Association (ANIERM), the program provides exporters with a specific plan of substantive means, allowing them to offer place their products on the market under conditions nearly equal to those enjoyed by foreign competitors. (Sources: El Financiero, 02/20/91, 02/22/91; El Nacional, 02/21/91)

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