

## MIGRANT CARAVAN FROM CENTRAL AMERICA



A few days ago my friend Steve Young sent me this expression: **“If you can’t find the solution it’s because you didn’t see the real problem.”** And it made me think of the migration of Mexicans and Central Americans heading for the United States in search of opportunities. It is a complex problem that can be analyzed from several different angles. Yet I also think that its deepest roots lay in two aspects:

1. The absence of the Rule of Law that guarantees security for a population; and
2. The economic situation, poverty and lack of jobs.

On October 15 a caravan of over 3,000 Hondurans left their homeland and headed for the United States. They were joined by a number of Salvadorans and Guatemalans, and after having crossed all of Guatemala, on October 19 they crossed the border into Mexico. A journalist asked a Honduran man **“Why are you leaving your country?”** The man answered, **“because there are no jobs. Even if you want to work, there are no jobs.”** According to the Honduran press, **“2 out of every 3 Hondurans live in poverty, and in 2016 the murder rate in that country was 60 per 100,000 inhabitants”.**

I am convinced that Mexican and Central American migration represents an indicator of the deep problems existing in the region, and it illustrates our dire need to generate greater economic development and strengthen the Rule of Law. The latter two are not built in the blink of an eye; institutionalization and systematization are required, as are full respect for the law, zero tolerance for corruption, private sector investment, legality, respect for private property, macroeconomic stability, sound public finances and strong social security systems, including a quality education system. There is nothing new in any of this. Latin America has been over-diagnosed, and the real problem and its solution have been found. The hard part has been instituting the solution so that we can finally arrive at concrete results

Migration is a local problem that bears regional and global consequences. Recipient countries of migrant flows are or ought to be those most interested in seeing the problem solved at its root. But that approach is not quite so simple, as many factors come into play, such as national sovereignty and the political, social and economic circumstances of the migrant recipient countries themselves. What is more, solving the root cause of the problem takes time and, meanwhile, migration continues to grow at an accelerated pace. In fact, **“the number of migrants grows faster than does the world’s population”**.



Fully aware of this, but focusing on the migrants, the September 2016 General Assembly of the United Nations drafted and adopted a global compact on migration, known as the **New York Declaration** for Refugees and Migrants. I sincerely recommend reading the Declaration because it sets the tone and the commitments that countries have adopted on the matter so as to guarantee the safety and respect for the human rights of migrants and refugees.

