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## Legal Implications of Mexico's 2025 Federal Labor Inspection Program

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Mexico's Department of Labor and Social Welfare ("STPS") presented the 2025 Federal Labor Inspection Program as a comprehensive strategy aimed at modernizing and strengthening the enforcement of labor rights across the country. The program's main objective is to shift from a reactive model to one that emphasizes prevention and correction with a strategic vision.

The program is built upon several key pillars designed to enhance its effectiveness and reach:

(i) **Expanded Coverage and Risk-Based Approach:** Inspections will now extend to target historically underserved geographic areas, where labor violations can often go undetected. Priority will be given to high-risk sectors or industries with a history of non-compliance, such as agribusiness, construction, and outsourced services.

(ii) **Technological Modernization ("Smart Inspection"):** The program incorporates the Labor Inspection Data Intelligence System ("SIDIL"), which uses artificial intelligence as part of a "smart inspection" strategy. This technology uses predictive models to identify potential violations and optimize inspection planning. With such tools, the Department of Labor aims to conduct approximately 43,000 inspections in 2025, a 34% increase compared to the previous year.

(iii) **Interagency Cooperation:** Coordination will be strengthened with other federal agencies, including the Department of the Economy (through the Directorate General of Mining), the Department of the Navy, and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency ("PROFEPA"). This collaboration is considered important for addressing violations that affect both labor rights and environmental conditions.

(iv) Promoting Voluntary Compliance: Through the Voluntary Labor Verification Program ("VELAVO"), companies will have the opportunity to self-assess and certify their compliance via a digital platform. Participants that meet the program's requirements may benefit from exemptions from routine inspections for one year, allowing the STPS to focus its resources on higher-risk sectors.

(v) Professionalization and New Guidelines: Inspectors will undergo intensive training to update their knowledge in labor law, conflict resolution, and the use of new technologies, all with a human-centered approach. As of June 2025, new operational guidelines have come into effect to make inspections more efficient. All inspections, whether random, complaint-based, or follow-up, must now be logged in a digital system called SIAP. These guidelines also include specific protocols for handling risk conditions, fatal accidents, and enhanced oversight of subcontracting practices through REPSE registration controls.

The initiative has been met with anticipation. The business sector has called for clear implementation standards and has warned against ambiguous criteria or overly punitive practices. Meanwhile, labor unions and worker organization groups have welcomed the program, emphasizing that a strong inspection framework is essential for the protection of labor rights. In summary, the 2025 Federal Labor Inspection Program reflects the Mexican government's commitment to modernizing labor oversight and ensuring more equitable working conditions throughout the country.

