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## LOOKING AT OUR FUTURE

Every nation, every government, every institution and even every individual looks at the future in their own manner... as the continuation of an established path, as a severance, as something entirely original or as the implementation of an existing model. The truth is that it appears to be easier to look at the future of others than that of our own. A very relevant question is the training of the personnel that will be in charge of the technological development and of the innovation in the country and, in a significant measure, of its possibility to constitute a politically and economically independent society.

No government of our region should overlook the 'Science without Frontiers' (CsF) program established in Brazil last year. A strategy was conceived with the purpose of promoting the consolidation, the internationalization and the expansion of Science, Technology and Innovation. It was oriented towards boosting in an almost explosive fashion the presence of students and researchers and of personnel of Brazilian industries in international institutions. The institutions are selected amongst the best available with the highest possible academic standing by area of knowledge, according to the available international rankings. The program facilitates the processes needed for this to take place and induces, through cooperation and work in joint projects, the internationalization of the universities and research institutions. For this to occur it was also necessary to revise, at the institutional level, all internal processes, so as to allow an adequate participation.

Of an extraordinary magnitude, the program contemplates providing in four years 75000 scholarships for college and graduate studies of different levels and durations (six months to four years) in prestigious foreign universities. Joint, or 'sandwich', programs predominate in pre- and post-graduate courses (about 25000 scholarships in each), followed by doctoral programs and post-doctoral stages abroad (close to 1000 scholarships each), there being as well other special modalities in lesser numbers.

The program is endowed with a budget equivalent to US\$ 1.4×10<sup>6</sup>, more than one half of the total annual budget for science, technology and innovation in Brazil, close to the total science and technology budget of Mexico for 2013 and about twice that dedicated to this area by Argentina in dollars subjected to a currency exchange control, in that same year.

Although it is a program of the Ministry for Science, Technology and Innovation (as it is now named) and the Ministry of Education, which cover 35000 and 40000 scholarships respectively, its coordination and execution are in the hands of two largely autonomous institutions that are therefore highly regarded and respected by the scientific community: the National Council for Science and Technological Development (CNPq) and the Coordination of Higher Level Personnel Specialization (CAPES). Interestingly, the program pursues a great transparency and the names of participants are made public in each opportunity and for each destination.

This is an initiative that reminds of the scientific modernization of Japan that took place at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup>, that promoted the travel of large amounts of students and professionals to train, mostly in Germany and particularly in Biomedical Sciences. However, this initiative had a much smaller support from the State and, regrettably, the approach of the official establishment led to the sad *motto* of 'rich nation, strong army'.

It must be emphasized that the priority areas, this aspect largely discussed in our attempts of sectorial planning are, in the commented Brazilian program, of a great breadth. It includes all those areas that are considered as levers for the development and wellbeing of the people in the years to come, when to remain behind and lose the train of development and progress will be something each time harder to overcome.

It is impossible to see our future while looking down at our belly button.

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