Now the action

by The San Diego Union-Tribune

Mexican President Felipe Calderon's heart is obviously in the right place. But, sometimes, one has to wonder where his head is.

For instance, take a look at how he has handled the enormously important yet incredibly delicate issue of immigration. After spending the first six months of his tenure largely focusing on battling drug cartels, Calderon spent the next six months making up for lost time by talking incessantly about the issue. But what is he saying? He has defined the boundaries of Mexico as anywhere one finds Mexicans, decried the failure of the U.S. Congress to pass immigration reform, and condemned what he saw as eruptions of anti-Mexican fear-mongering by presidential candidates.

And during a recent visit to Tijuana, Mexico, Calderon announced the creation of an innovative pilot program guaranteeing food, shelter, emergency medical care and temporary employment to the half-million Mexicans deported from the United States each year. Deportees will also have the chance to communicate with family members back home. It will all be funded by a combination of government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Calderon said the program, known as Humane Repatriation, will be launched in Tijuana next year and will eventually be expanded to other cities along the U.S.-Mexico border.

There is nothing wrong with this kind of humanitarian program. In fact, there is a lot right with it. These people obviously need help, having just been deported from the United States. Since these migrants come from all over Mexico, it's possible that many of them will find themselves in foreign surroundings, perhaps hundreds of miles from home. Many of them will probably be hungry, unemployed and homeless.

And so it is likely that these poor souls will need and appreciate the help of the government - the Mexican government. After all, these are citizens of the Republic of Mexico. And it's no stretch to say that, if their home country had done a better job of providing them with economic opportunities they might never have left home in the first place. They wouldn't have come to the United States illegally, and they would never have been deported.

Calderon seems to understand that fairly well. He has argued before that Mexico has the duty to end corruption and provide jobs, and that this would produce fewer migrants. Those are the right words, but there has been little action to back them up. Hopefully, that will change in the months to come.

Humanitarian efforts are great. It's truly commendable that Calderon is stepping up to the plate and taking care of his own people. We wish him well. But we also wish that the Mexican president had shown the resolve to offer this kind of assistance earlier in the process - when it counted, before these expatriates packed their belongings, gathered their dreams, and headed north.

Reprinted from The San Diego Union-Tribune. â€“ CNS.

Now the action by The San Diego Union-Tribune