



Reduction of Working Hours: Regional Lessons and the Path Forward for Mexico

The Human Capital and Labor Affairs Committee of **AMCHAM** Mexico City convened a strategic session to examine the proposed reduction of the workweek to 40 hours and to discuss international insights on implementation. Speakers included Bárbara Vera (Garrigues Chile), Franco Muschi (Garrigues Peru), Carolina Camacho (Garrigues Colombia), Leonor Quiroz (PepsiCo), and Alfredo Kupfer (Garrigues), with Diego Naveda (Grupo Estrategia Política) as moderator.

International Experiences: Chile, Peru, and Colombia

During the session, panelists presented cases from Chile, Peru, and Colombia regarding the implementation of reduced working hours:

In **Colombia**, the maximum workday is 9 hours, with exceptions for specific sectors such as security services and special shifts, which can extend up to 12 hours with overtime compensation. The reduction of working hours has been applied flexibly, allowing internal agreements between companies and workers to maintain productivity. The Colombian experience shows that formalization and collective bargaining are essential for the successful implementation of changes in working hours.

In **Chile**, the experience has been particularly significant. Working hours encompass lunch breaks, and overtime pay is legally permitted, although its implementation is frequently hampered by bureaucracy. Chilean companies have implemented strategies such as flexible schedules, alternating shifts, and sectoral agreements to follow the law while minimizing operational disruption. Success in Chile has depended on combining compliance with internal agreements that foster flexibility and preserve productivity.

In **Peru**, challenges are linked to informality and low unionization, which limit the effectiveness of flexibility mechanisms. It was emphasized that productivity is directly tied to labor formality and that reducing working hours requires coordination among internal and external stakeholders to be effective.

Panelists agreed that the experiences of Colombia and Chile demonstrate that the successful implementation of reduced working hours depends on a combination of clear regulation, sector-specific flexibility, and internal agreements between employers and workers.

Challenges and Proposals in Mexico

The discussion on reducing Mexico's workweek—currently proposed at 40 hours—revealed notable challenges. Participants underscored the need to distinguish between sectors and regions, as well as to permit exceptions through union agreements, especially in 24/7 industries, manufacturing, and sales. Implementation of shorter hours should be incremental,



tailored to each sector, and designed to preserve competitiveness and operational continuity.

Among the proposals discussed were:

- Conducting impact simulation scenarios based on sector, working hours, and measures applied.
- Creating a set of ten consensus-based measures between the private sector and authorities to guide implementation.
- Establishing legislative transitory provisions that allow flexibility without amending core articles of the law.

Business Adaptation

Collaboration between companies and unions will be key to the transition toward shorter workweeks, ensuring respect for labor rights while safeguarding operational continuity and sustainability. Best practices shared included flexible work models —such as 6x1, 5x2, and 4x3—, increased overtime to offset potential productivity losses, and the use of alternating or intensive shifts during strategic periods. Continuous workforce training is essential to support the transition to new work schedules, ensuring worker adaptation without compromising productivity or competitiveness.

Sectoral Perspective and Impact Assessment

Industries with critical operations, such as manufacturing and mining, require greater flexibility. A gradual transition allows for schedule adjustments and extended shifts when necessary, ensuring productivity and competitiveness. Moreover, reducing working hours may exacerbate shortages of specialized personnel, making it crucial to accompany the transition with training programs, skills development, and potential integration of migrant talent. International experience and ILO recommendations highlight the need for rigorous economic and social impact assessments, implementing progressive adjustments by sector, and evaluating results during the first years of transition.

Reducing the workweek to 40 hours can be successfully implemented in Mexico if supported by strategic planning, collaboration with unions, ongoing training, and flexible operational frameworks. International experience provides valuable examples of how to manage this transition gradually, protecting both workers' rights and business competitiveness. The key will be to design models tailored to each sector, with working groups that bring together all stakeholders and continuous support through public policies and training programs.